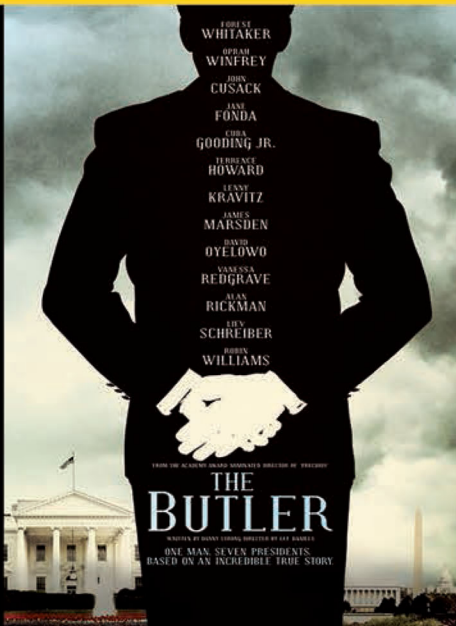
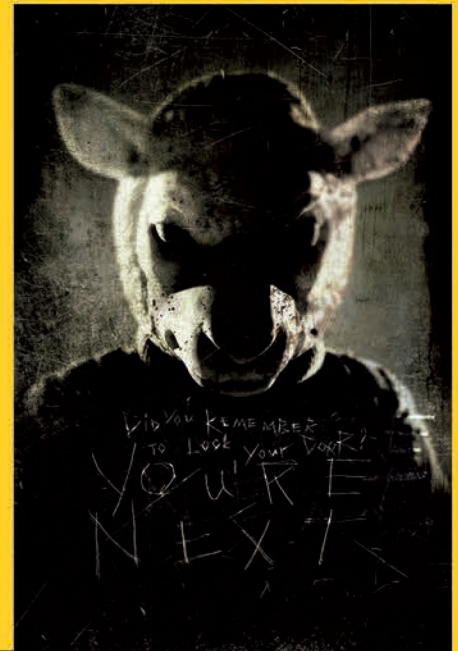


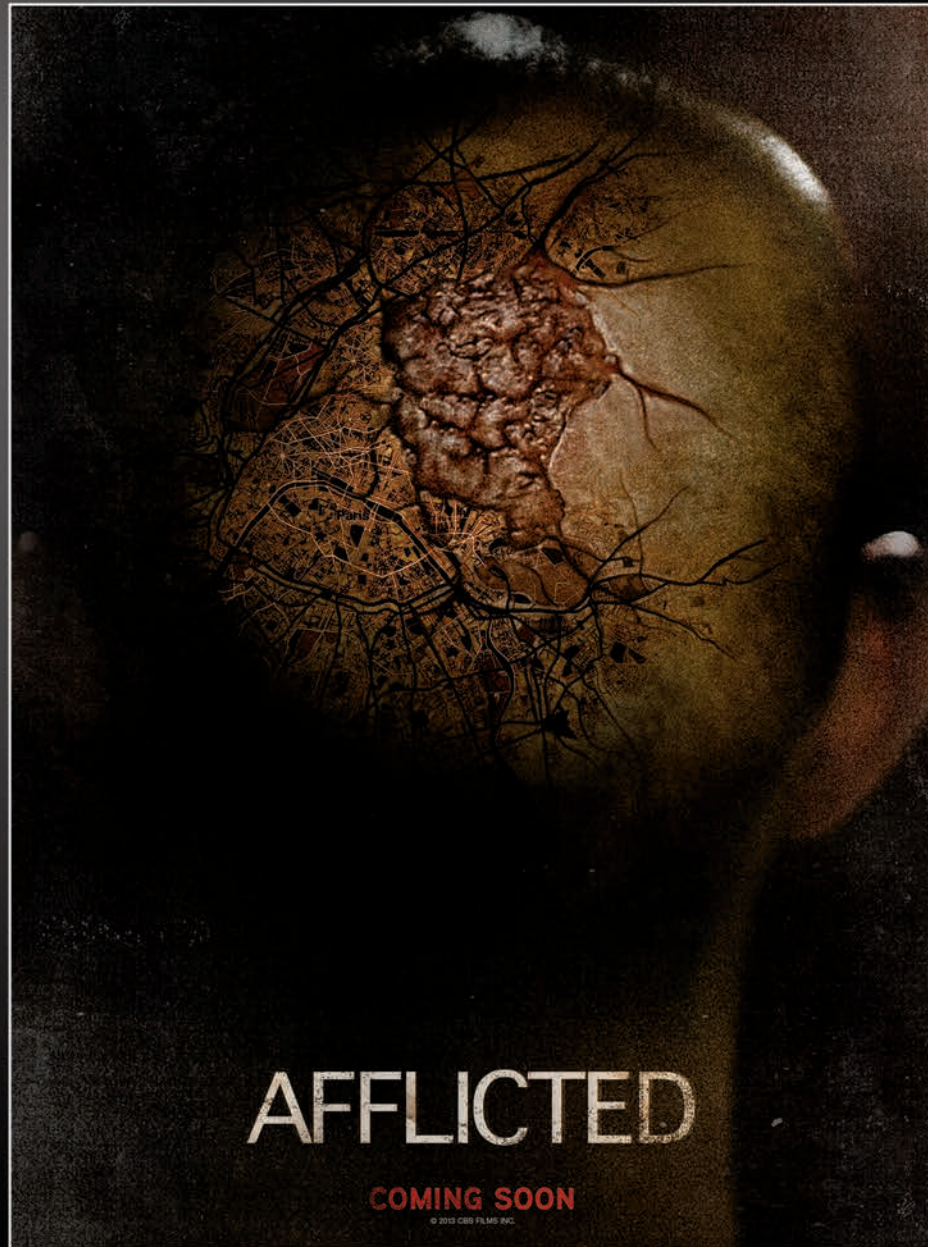
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## PATIENCE PAYS OFF IN COMPLETED FILM SALES

By Stuart Kemp and Pamela McClintock

Call it the finished-film phenomenon. At this year's festival, international sales agents are pushing completed movies more frequently than independent projects at the script stage. That's because agents are fighting over the same talent and are having trouble packaging star vehicles.

An example of the trend is the British film *Sunshine on Leith*, an adaptation of the hit Scottish play featuring music from The Proclaimers ("500 Miles"). Focus Features International is shopping

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Assange Movie a Tough Sell to the Masses

By Etan Vlessing

Director **Bill Condon** presents WikiLeaks founder **Julian Assange** as both a visionary and a troubled anarchist in *The Fifth Estate*, a strategy that highlights the upcoming challenge of marketing a Hollywood film about a figure who might repel some U.S. moviegoers.

On Friday, after the opening-night premiere of the Dream-Works/Participant film produced mixed reviews, both Condon and star **Benedict Cumberbatch** dodged questions about whether they consider Assange a hero or anti-hero. The Australian hacker faces charges of sexual misconduct in Sweden and remains holed up in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. The filmmakers were

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Nicole Kidman greeted fans at the world premiere of *The Railway Man* Friday. Kidman stars opposite Colin Firth in the film.

## MARKET POISED FOR BIG WEEKEND

What's hot, what flopped and all the early buzz as the busiest screening days in memory kick off. Says one agent: 'This is the high-water mark' By Pamela McClintock and Stuart Kemp

Buyers looking for product are gearing up for one of the busiest screening weekends in the history of the Toronto Film Festival. Friday's first round of offerings brought decidedly mixed reaction. The clear darling was **Tom Hardy** star vehicle *Locke*, written and directed by British filmmaker **Steven Knight**, creator of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Several buyers immediately began circling the drama.

*Locke*, which made its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival, isn't an official Toronto entry; rather, IM Global and CAA are arranging private screenings for both U.S. buyers

and foreign distributors.

Two screenings that drew several buyers but a lukewarm response were the **Kristen Wiig**

comedy *Hateship Loveship* and the drama *The Love Punch*, starring **Pierce Brosnan** and **Emma Thompson**. *Hateship Loveship* stars **Hailee Steinfeld** as a girl who tries to set up her nanny (Wiig) with her father (**Guy Pearce**). Both are likely to sell, but may represent smaller deals.

Several high-profile films looking for a U.S. home were generating buzz before Friday premieres, including **Daniel Radcliffe** horror pic *Horns*, **Colin Firth** drama *The*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Oscar Shocker: Academy COO Steps Down

By Aaron Crouch

**Ric Robertson** is stepping down as COO of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Robertson, a 32-year veteran of the Academy, will transition into a consulting role, and his duties will be taken over by other staffers, sources tell *THR*. The move comes after Robertson took a three-month leave of absence from his duties.

In a Friday memo to Academy staff announcing his departure, Robertson wrote that he came to the decision "with considerable deliberation" during his time off.

"I'm going to continue my relationship with the Academy, however, as a consultant focusing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THR HEAT INDEX



**TOM HIDDLESTON**

The rising British star, in town to support Jim Jarmusch's vampire drama *Only Lovers Left Alive*, lands the lead role in Guillermo del Toro's haunted house pic *Crimson Peak*, replacing Benedict Cumberbatch.



**JUSTIN TRUDEAU**

The Canadian member of parliament and son of the late Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who recently admitted he had smoked marijuana, finishes last in a poll on competence.



**JESSE EISENBERG**

The star's *The Double* builds buzz as he takes center stage as Dirk Diggler, the role originated by Mark Wahlberg, in the Jason Reitman-directed *Boogie Nights* live read.

KNOW YOUR DEALMAKER



**Helen Lee Kim**  
Good Universe

President of International The international sales and financing company is representing *The Reach*, which has nabbed actor Jeremy Irvine (*War Horse*) to star opposite Michael Douglas in the thriller, directed by Jean-Baptiste Leonetti.

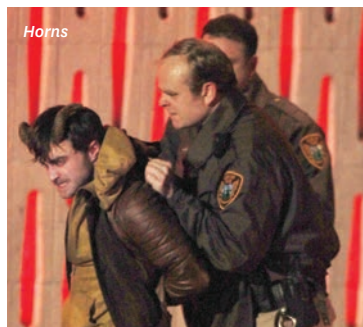
## Big Weekend

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

*Railway Man* and *Bad Words*, marking **Jason Bateman's** feature directorial debut. American distributors are especially keen to see *Horns*, about a man who grows horns after coming under suspicion for killing his girlfriend, and *Bad Words*, starring Bateman as a man who seeks to redeem his childhood by entering a spelling bee contest. In the Midnight Madness section, *The Station* — playing at 12:01 a.m. Friday — was also on every buyer's must-see list.

The weekend schedule is so crowded this year that buyers are relying more than ever on their cheat sheets. One distribution operation prioritizes its screening grid by grading a film either an "A," "B" or "F" based on prefestival intelligence (top executives attend the "A" films).

Saturday and Sunday's crowded roster includes *Can a Song Save Your Life?*, starring **Keira Knightley**, **Mark Ruffalo** and **Steinfeld**; *You Are Here*, directed by *Mad Men* creator **Matthew Weiner**; comedian **Mike Myers'** documentary *Supermensch: The Legend of Shep Gordon*; *The F-Word*, starring Radcliffe opposite **Zoe Kazan**; *Life of Crime*, starring **Jennifer Aniston** and based on a story by the late



**Elmore Leonard**; horror-thriller *The Sacrament*; and **Atom Egoyan's** **Reese Witherspoon-Firth** starrer *Devil's Knot*. A number of additional acquisition titles play next week as well.

"It's unusual how many titles there are for sale. This is the high-water mark," says veteran UTA independent agent **Rich Klubeck**.

CAA's **Micah Green** adds that all the "ingredients are there for a healthy market. There have been a lot of box office successes the past year and distributors are feeling bullish."

The CAA-repped *Locke* could be one of the first deals closed on the ground in Toronto. The movie, about a man whose life unravels in nearly real time while he is at the wheel of his car across the film's almost 90 minutes, generated generally strong reviews out of Venice. *Locke*, directed by Knight from his own script, is set entirely in the car Hardy's character drives. **THR**

## Assange

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

asked at the press conference whether the Assange character was watered down to appeal both to global fans of Wikileaks and U.S. audiences who might abhor the impact of his actions on U.S. Government secrets. Condon said he and producer Anonymous Content didn't set out to make a movie that takes sides. "Our conversations were just go ahead, embrace the ambiguity, be more ambiguous, don't worry about that," Condon said of his backers.

But now Disney faces a challenge in releasing the \$30 million-budgeted film Oct. 18 in the U.S. via its Touchstone label. The studio deliberately is billing the R-rated film as a thriller rather than a political biopic. It hopes fans of adult dramas and the similarly themed *The Social Network* are curious to know more about Assange and his impact. "He's an absolute pioneer and he's made a huge difference," Condon said.

Said DreamWorks chairman **Stacey Snider**: "We did feel that the questions raised were more provocative than the conclusions that we could possibly draw because he's a global figure who's still alive." **THR**



## Patience Pays

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the movie to foreign buyers, and will host a special performance by the band Monday night, followed by an industry screening Tuesday.

"*Sunshine on Leith* is an interesting example of the way in which the world has changed, and I think for the better," says Focus International co-president **Alison Thompson**. "In some ways, the market today reminds me of the market in the mid-1990s. In those days, there wasn't a huge presale market."

The Solution's **Lisa Wilson** agrees that completed titles are good prospects, noting that Toronto has "gained more and more importance for finished films" in the past few years in terms of selling a film internationally. Wilson is using the festival and market to sell the **Joel Edgerton** drama *Felony* to foreign buyers.

IM Global is also juggling offers on the **Tom Hardy** starrer *Locke* and **Jon M. Chu's** follow-up concert documentary *Justin Bieber: Believe*. Both are playing outside of the festival, but are drawing heavy interest from foreign distributors. *Believe* screens Monday night for buyers and the word on the street is that the pop star, who was in Toronto earlier this week, may put in an appearance. Says IM Global chief **Stuart Ford**: "It is always good to have a finished film. There are always distributors with gaps on their [release] slates. People come to Toronto to buy finished movies." **THR**

## Robertson

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

on the [Oscar] show, award rules and categories," he wrote. "I'm excited to be on these projects in addition to serving as a resource to our new president, **Cheryl Boone Isaacs**, CEO **Dawn Hudson**, and you, the Academy staff."

Robertson added that he was "grateful" for his years working with the staff and looks forward to continuing his relationship with the Academy.

"Thank you for your support of the Academy and for the kindness you've shown me personally," he said in closing. **THR**

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## TORONTO DEALS

**KA-CHING!**  
WHO'S INKING  
ON THE DOTTED LINE  
AT THE FESTIVAL

# Mirren Takes *Hundred-Foot Journey* for Producers Oprah and Spielberg

By Pamela McClintock

**Participant Media** has come aboard to co-finance and co-produce DreamWorks' *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, starring **Helen Mirren** and rising star **Manish Dayal**. **Lasse Hallstrom** is directing.

The deal marks the sixth collaboration between DreamWorks and Participant, including **Bill Condon's** WikiLeaks drama *The Fifth Estate*, which made its world premiere Thursday night.

Based on the bestselling book by **Richard Morais**, *Hundred-Foot Journey* tells the story of an Indian family who open a restaurant in the south of France across from a Michelin-starred French restaurant, setting off a fierce culinary battle.

Hallstrom will direct from a script by **Steve Knight** and



Bring on the poutine!

begins shooting next week. Disney will open *Hundred-Foot Journey* in the U.S. on Aug. 8, 2014.

**Steven Spielberg**,

**Oprah Winfrey** and **Juliet Blake** are producing the movie, with Participant's **Jeff Skoll** and **Jonathan King** serving as executive producers.

Participant CEO **Jim Berk** calls the film a "dream project, with an amazing line-up of talent and a story that's totally in the Participant wheelhouse."

Adds DreamWorks partner **Stacey Snider**: "We are delighted that we can continue our successful collaboration with Participant on another DreamWorks film."

## Kristin Scott Thomas Travels to Paris for *My Old Lady*

**Kristin Scott Thomas** has joined **Maggie Smith** and **Kevin Kline** in *My Old Lady*, the directorial debut of playwright and screenwriter **Israel Horovitz**. BBC is coming on board to finance the film, with Cohen Media Group closing a deal for U.S. and Canada distribution rights. International sales are being handled by Protagonist Pictures. *Lady* sees Kline as a down-and-out New Yorker who travels to Paris to settle affairs dealing with an inherited apartment. Horovitz is adapting his own award-winning play. Shooting is set to begin in Paris on Sept. 26.

## Cronenberg's First Film Getting Danish Remake

Danish filmmaker **Rie Rasmussen** is remaking **David Cronenberg's** first feature film *Shivers* for producers **Jeff Sackman** and **Michael Baker**. *Shivers*, released 40 years ago, tells the story of a



genetically engineered strain of parasites that turns people into violent sex addicts. The film is set to start shooting in February 2014 and will be updated to mirror today's realities and is set in a post-HIV world, where people interact through screens rather than skin. **Quentin Tarantino**, Rasmussen's mentor, says the director is the "perfect choice" to direct the remake.

## Magnolia Snaps Up U.S. Rights to *Wrong*

Ahead of its Sept. 12 gala, **Jeremiah Chechik's** romantic comedy *The Right Kind of Wrong* starring **Ryan Kwanten** (HBO's *True Blood*) and **Sara Canning** (CW's *The Vampire Diaries*) has sold U.S. rights to Wagner/Cuban Com-

pany's **Magnolia Pictures**. The film details the story of a failed writer-turned-dishwasher made famous for his many flaws in a blog called Why You Suck, an Internet success written by his ex-wife.

## Holly Hunter Joins Al Pacino Drama *Manglehorn*

**David Gordon Green's** *Manglehorn* has found its leading lady. **Holly Hunter** will star opposite **Al Pacino** in the drama, about an eccentric man coming to terms with a past crime that cost him the love of his life. **Chris Messina** and **Harmony Korine** also have joined the cast. Worldview Entertainment is producing and financing the drama, which marks the company's second teaming with Green after *Joe*, starring **Nicolas Cage**.

## Myriad Picks Up Katie Holmes Starrer *Miss Meadows*

**Myriad Pictures** will handle all international rights to the thriller *Miss Meadows*. Writ-



Scott Thomas is headed to Paris to shoot *My Old Lady*.



Kwanten



Hunter

ten and directed by **Karen Leigh Hopkins** (*Stepmom*), the project is described as a satirical fairy tale and stars **Katie Holmes** and **James Badge Dale** (*Parkland*). The film recently wrapped production on location in Ohio.

## Kazakh Director to Helm Canadian Indie *Hacker*

Kazakh director **Akan Satayev** has signed on to direct the \$5 million feature *Hacker*, to be executive produced by Brillstein Entertainment Partners. Satayev, who directed the Kazakh best foreign-language Academy Award entries *Strayed* and *Myn Bala*, will lens the Canadian independent drama based on real events about a young immigrant kid who becomes involved with a cyber criminal organization known as the DarkWeb. *Hacker* is produced by **Sanzhar Sultanov's** indie production shingle Know Rules Media, which is backed by Canadian venture capitalist **Loudon Owen**.

## Vivian Maier Doc On the Block Via Submarine, Hanway

U.S. sales agent, producer and distributor **Submarine Entertainment** and U.K.-based sales label **Hanway Select** have teamed up to sell *Finding Vivian Maier*. The documentary, about street photographer **Vivian Maier**, whose work took the international art scene by storm after being discovered in a storage unit, makes its world debut during TIFF. The worldwide sales deal was negotiated by **David Koh** and **Josh Braun** of Submarine. **YIP**

# I DID SAY THAT, EH!

A look at who's saying what at the Toronto film fest



➔ “I love Toronto. I’m from Rochester so I used to come here when I was younger and buy cigarettes and stuff.”

**KRISTEN WIIG**

The actress, reminiscing before the premiere of her film *Hateship Loveship*.

➔ “I’m not a betting man, but I imagine he won’t particularly want to support the film.”

**BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH**

The *Fifth Estate* star, speculating about WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange’s reaction to the film. Cumberbatch plays Assange in the movie.

➔ “Prediction: The Fifth Estate will be a commercial failure.”

**WIKILEAKS**

The Assange-fronted organization, tweeting in response to reviews of the new film.

➔ “Knowing Roger, he’s probably lurking about somewhere up here because he wants to see the movie we’re going to see.”

**CHAZ EBERT**

The widow of Roger Ebert, remembering her husband at TIFF’s Sept. 5 tribute to the reviewer, who died of cancer in April.

➔ “I’m back in Toronto for 24 hours. Is there a good breakfast / fight club you could recommend?”



**DANE COOK**

The comedian, in town to play Reed Rothchild in Jason Reitman’s live reading of *Boogie Nights*, asking his Twitter followers for travel tips.

➔ “At THE BIG CHILL #TIFF13 1983-themed after-party. A lot of faxing going on, if you know what I mean.”

**GERRY FLAHIVE**

The National Film Board of Canada senior producer, tweeting at the reunion celebrating the film’s 30th anniversary.

## For Sale! Hot Oscar Contenders

For buyers hoping to snatch up next year’s big winner, TIFF is just the place *By Scott Roxborough*

Toronto has established itself as the market that picks Oscar winners. Not only the best-picture titles (*Argo*, *The King’s Speech* and *Slumdog Millionaire* are just three examples of TIFF-to-Oscar glory) but also in the foreign-language category. While international Oscar hopefuls often premiere at Berlin, Cannes or Venice, the crucial North American sale usually comes in Toronto. For titles closing before TIFF, Toronto is the platform to launch an Oscar campaign.

Foreign selection committees seem to have noticed, with several announcing their foreign-language candidates just ahead of TIFF to give them the best chance of winning over buyers and Academy voters. Germany’s Beta Cinema is bringing two Oscar contenders to Toronto

this year: the Romanian family drama *Child’s Pose*, which won the Golden Bear in Berlin and has become the most commercially successful Romanian film in 20 years, and German hopeful *Two Lives*, a true-life drama featuring two faces familiar to the Academy: *Nowhere in Africa* star **Juliane Kohler** and Sweden’s **Liv Ullmann** (*Face to Face*, *Autumn Sonata*).

Chile’s entry, *Gloria*, another Berlin title, secured a U.S. sale on the back of the Silver Bear-winning performance by **Paulina Garcia** as the title character, a 50-something woman trying to start over. Roadside Attractions will be using *Gloria*’s North American premiere at TIFF to get the buzz machine humming.

It’s a similar story with *Pioneer*, an ’80s-set thriller from Norwegian director **Erik Skjoldbjærg** (*Insomnia*), which will have its

international premiere here. Magnolia pre-bought *Pioneer* from TrustNordisk early this year, but its awards push officially starts now, even if *Pioneer* is one of three films on Norway’s foreign-language shortlist (the others are **Arild Ostin Ommundsen**’s *It’s Only Make Believe* and *I Am Yours* from **Iram Haq**).

Finally, Swedish sales outfit The Yellow Affair will be looking to entice more buyers to **Gabriela Pichler**’s immigrant drama *Eat Sleep Die*, which screened at TIFF last year and has sold to some 36 countries.

The big name missing this year — not from Toronto but from the foreign Oscar list — is **Abdellatif Kechiche**’s Palme d’Or winner *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. The film’s French distributor released the lesbian love story in France after the deadline to qualify for the 2014 foreign-language race. But Sundance Selects, which picked up U.S. rights, says it will be pushing for Oscar noms in the best actress and supporting actress categories for leads **Adele Exarchopoulos** and **Lea Seydoux**, making *Blue* one of TIFF’s hottest Oscar contenders. **THR**



Chile’s *Gloria* is one of several foreign-language Oscar hopefuls screening at TIFF.

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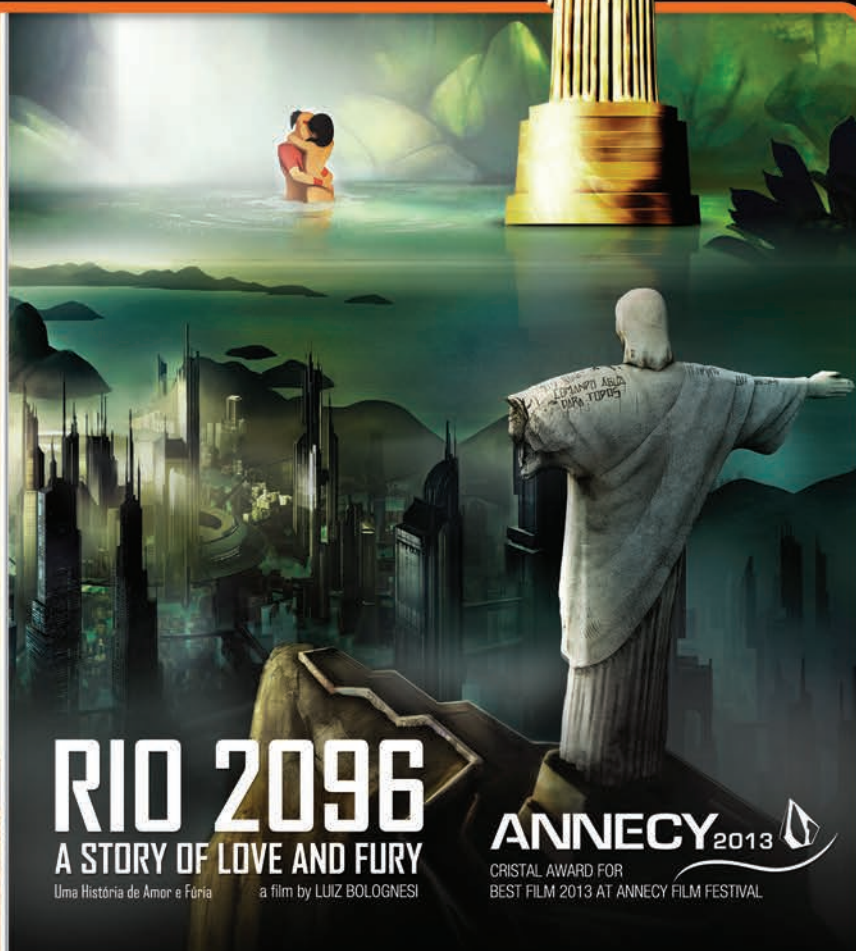


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PUBLIC 2	09/12	8:45 PM	SCOTIABANK 2 (SCOTIABANK THEATRE)
PUBLIC 3	09/14	4:00 PM	SCOTIABANK 4 (SCOTIABANK THEATRE)



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# About Town

RAMBLING REPORTER *By Sharon Swart & Carson Griffith*



Bondar, with her space crew in 2010.

## Gravity Enlists Canadian Space Traveler

Warner Bros. is adding a bit of real-life gravitas to its *Gravity* gala. Sources tell *THR* that **Roberta Bondar**, Canada's first female astronaut and the first neurologist in space, will attend the premiere of the **Sandra Bullock** thriller on Sunday. Bondar spent more than a decade as NASA's head of space medicine, giving her a bit in common with Bullock's mission scientist character Dr. Ryan Stone. Last year, Warners brought **Tony Mendez**, the real-life subject of *Argo*, to Toronto to help kick off its awards campaign. *Gravity*, written by director **Alfonso Cuarón** and his son Jonas, is fiction and has nothing to do with Bondar's story, but the affiliation with a Canadian hero certainly won't hurt the movie — especially in Toronto.

## Fifth Estate's Cumberbash

Instead of an official afterparty for TIFF opener *The Fifth Estate*, Anonymous Content manager-producer **Michael Sugar** hosted a cozy late-night bash at Soho House's Toronto club along with vodka brand Grey Goose. The film's **Benedict Cumberbatch**, **Daniel Bruhl** and director **Bill Condon** held court, while most of the other bold-faced names in town mixed about, including **Colin Hanks**, **Paul Giamatti**, **Michael Fassbender**, **Juno Temple** and filmmaker **Steve McQueen**. A phalanx of agents, managers and lawyers congratulated UTA agent **Billy Lazarus** for booking his client's Toronto trifecta (Cumberbatch also co-stars in *12 Years a Slave* and *August: Osage County*). Several power attorneys, in particular, jockeyed for position as Cumberbatch is currently lawyerless. Fassbender, who arrived after midnight, treated the crowd to a dance display, grooving on-and-off for an hour with various people, including his obliging publicist and Hanks.

## Yorkville: Wrong Side of the Tracks

Festgoers, be advised: It's no longer hip to hang around Yorkville with a laminate around your neck. Now that TIFF has shifted to the

Bell Lightbox theater complex in downtown's Entertainment District, the tony uptown shopping enclave has become a ghost town. A Hazelton hotel employee says he spotted a couple of "studio types" fussing over their badges. "We're not downtown anymore, take that thing off," he overheard them saying. "We used to see the badges all the time," adds the employee. "But now it's like, 'Oh, you're up in Yorkville, not at the Lightbox — don't wear that thing around here!'"

## Cheerleaders Death Wish?

At the pre-premiere party for *Midnight Madness* opener *All Cheerleaders Die*, held at Bras-saii, the filmmakers shared tales of high school strikeouts. "I had a crush on a couple of cheerleaders when I was a freshman and they were seniors," says co-writer-director **Chris Sivertson**. "But I did not date cheerleaders." Co-director **Lucky McKee** was right there with him: "I



From left: *Cheerleaders* producers attended the film's premiere Sept. 5.

probably wanted to, but no." Producer **Andrew van den Houten** says he was more into "the weird artsy people" but admits: "I always looked at cheerleaders — as well as football players — with curiosity." But, insists Sivertson, "It's not an anti-cheerleader movie. We like cheerleaders, and we like how enthusiastic they are about things because everyone is so concerned about being cool and reserved." Interesting then that everyone, including some of the filmmakers, kept flubbing the film's title last night, calling it *All Cheerleaders Must Die*. **THR**



The Ritz-Carlton Toronto

## Out&About

**Claire Danes** and **Hugh Dancy** endured the customs line Sept. 4 at Toronto Pearson airport. Meanwhile, Lionsgate's **Patrick Wachsberger** waited patiently for his luggage at the carousel. ... **Hugh Jackman**, **Jake Gyllenhaal** and their *Prisoners* director **Denis Villeneuve** joined cast and crew at Momofuku for a dinner hosted by Warner Bros.' **Sue Kroll**. ... A fan chased **David Cronenberg** out of the Bell Lightbox on Sept. 5, falling flat on his face behind the oblivious director ... Milling about at the Ritz-Carlton were ICM's **Lorrie Bartlett** and **Jessica Lacy**. ... **Jason Reitman** shushed a premiere-goer who was talking during introductions for *The Fifth Estate*. ... **Steve McQueen** and his *12 Years a Slave* stars **Chiwetel Ejiofor** and **Michael Fassbender** chatted in the lobby of the Shangri-La on Sept. 6.



Wachsberger



**CARICE VAN HOUTEN**  
in Christian Dior Couture

In an unusually dressed-up look for Toronto, the Dutch actress rocked a Christian Dior Couture gown at the gala premiere for festival opener *The Fifth Estate*. The dress' simple black sheath top tapered down to a sexy backless reveal, while its flower-and-black-gauze-covered skirt billowed out elegantly.

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Mon Sept 9, 21:45 Scotiabank 4

Wed Sept 11, 18:45 Scotiabank 2

Thu Sept 12, 10:15 Scotiabank 3 (press & industry)

Sun Sept 15, 21:15 Scotiabank 1



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# About Town



1 *The Fifth Estate* producer Michael Sugar and DreamWorks co-chairman and CEO Stacey Snider celebrated their film's gala opening Sept. 5 at the Grey Goose-sponsored party at Soho House Toronto, where guests dined on kale salad, flank steak and mushroom risotto.



2 From left: *Fifth Estate*'s Dan Stevens, Alicia Vikander (in Erdem) and Daniel Bruhl at TIFF's opening-night party.

3 TIFF director and CEO Piers Handling (left) and TIFF Bell Lightbox artistic director Noah Cowan flanked David Cronenberg at the photo call for *The Cronenberg Project*, an exhibition inspired by the director's work.

4 *Fifth Estate* director Bill Condon came out in support of his film about WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

5 Mia Wasikowska donned Christian Dior for the premiere of vampire drama *Only Lovers Left Alive*. The actress also has two other films at the festival, *Tracks* and *The Double*.

6 From left: *The Big Chill*'s Mary Kay Place, Kevin Kline and JoBeth Williams reunited for the film's 30th anniversary.



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# Ralph Fiennes

The celebrated actor discusses stepping behind the camera for the second time on *The Invisible Woman*, making peace with the past and why he decided to play Dickens By Stuart Kemp

**F**OR HIS SECOND FILM AS director Ralph Fiennes takes on British literary giant Charles Dickens and his secret love affair with a young wannabe actress. Fiennes, 51, plays the writer with Felicity Jones as the young muse and Joanna Scanlan as the writer's wife and mother of his children. Kristen Scott Thomas and Tom Hollander also star in the Abi Morgan-penned script based on Claire Tomalin's book of the same name. The divorced Fiennes, who makes his home in East London, talked to *The Hollywood Reporter* about his second time behind the lens, celebrity and secrets and whether he'd ever make movies in Hollywood.

**How did the *Invisible Woman* project come to you? Was it as a directing proposition or as a vehicle for you to play Dickens?**

It came from the BBC to Gaby Tana, who was one of the producers on *Coriolanus*. So she and the BBC as it were came to me with it as a sort of proposal to direct and act in if I wanted to do both. I initially responded to directing it and not to play Charles Dickens, but as I worked on it I became more and more interested in playing Dickens.

**What changed your mind?**

I worked on the script in great detail with Abi [Morgan]. I found myself pacing around my kitchen, talking to her and improvising all the different roles and obviously the Dickens part became more and more interesting to me and I became more and more curious in the end and wanted to have a go at it. I did approach one actor to do it and that didn't go anywhere. I think after that I became more excited with the idea of playing him.

**The film is a portrayal of love and of celebrity and the restrictions**

**fame can put on personal freedom. Was that something you wanted to explore?**

A little bit. The thing that I would like to stress is the first thing that moved me — the essential element of the idea of a woman who must hold her past as a secret and the idea we can all live with the past in us and have lives we don't ever talk about. We keep the intimacies of past relationships, whether it is with friends, lovers, family, brothers, sisters, inside us. These things sort of mark us, and I think we carry them with us and we often don't get to talk about them more and get to understand what they mean — in some cases they can leave a sort of wound.

**Is directing and starring in a film as onerous as it sounds?**

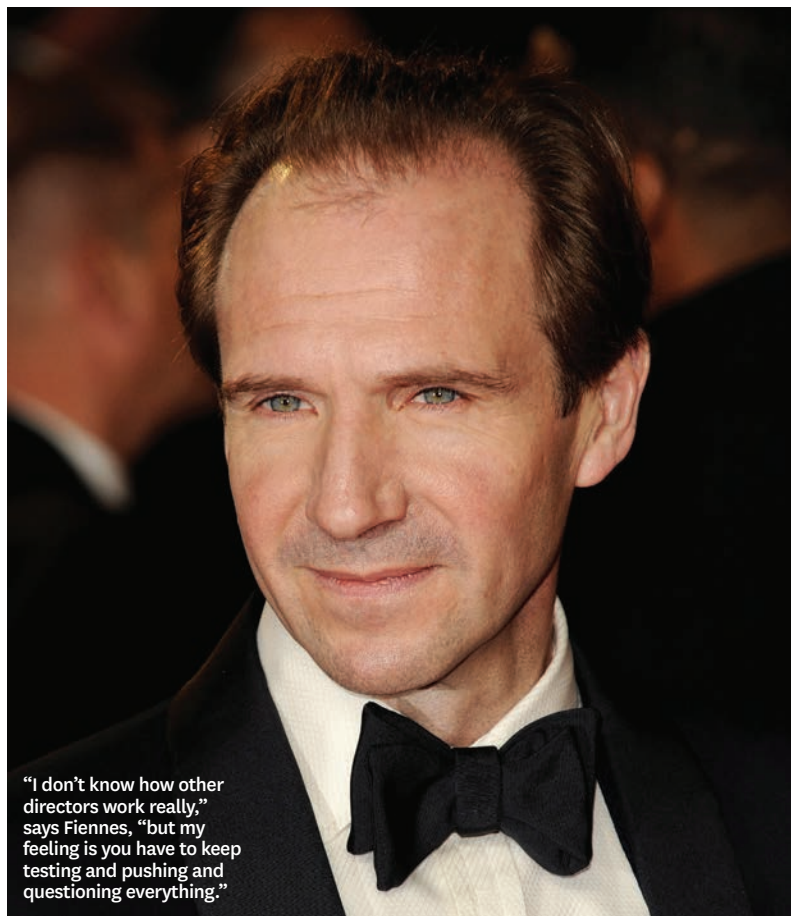
It's really hard. It's easy once you finish to forget how hard it is. People ask me, "Will you do it again?" and I say, "Absolutely not," but of course I don't know. But I would love to experience directing a film and not be in it.

**How did you find your second time behind the camera directing yet another accomplished cast?**

I guess I was lucky. We don't know what's going to happen until the day. Kristin Scott Thomas and Tom Hollander are people I know well and were incredibly supportive to me and both of them were very generous in being open to me suggesting things to them. But I do think that between the cast

## VITAL STATS

**Nationality** British  
**Born** Dec. 22, 1962  
**Film in Toronto** *The Invisible Woman*  
**Selected Filmography** *Schindler's List* (1993), *The English Patient* (1996), *The Constant Gardener* (2005), *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2010), *Skyfall* (2012)  
**Notable awards** BAFTA, National Society of Film Critics and New York Film Critics Circle, best supporting actor, *Schindler's List* (1993), London Critics' Circle, best British actor, and British Independent Film, best actor, *The Constant Gardener* (2005)



and the crew there was a good atmosphere and Felicity [Jones] is someone I have a very high regard for.

**And Joanna Scanlon?**

She was genius. She came in and very sweetly agreed to read for me in casting and she just absolutely got it I felt the moment she started the reading. She's incredible.

***The Invisible Woman* has strong performances from women. Do you feel you direct women in a different way from men?**

I don't think so. This script happens to be full of important parts for women. I don't think I have a gender-specific way of directing. (Laughs.) I hope I don't.

**How important is it to build trust between the actors and the director?**

You can't make trust happen. I think you have to be open about what you think you need and stay open about the position. I think I'm quite alert and if I feel I am going against my instincts I will stop. If I feel something is just not right, like a note or a nuance, then you have to say it, don't you.

**What kind of project would you like to do next?**

People have approached me with various things and I can see that

they've asked me to do something like *Coriolanus*. I get scripts which are high-impact male action thrillers. Quite muscular. And I say, well, wait until you see *The Invisible Woman*. (Laughs.) There could be nothing more different.

**Would you like to direct movies in Hollywood?**

Absolutely I would. I think it would have to be the right thing; it is such a demanding thing that I would have to feel strongly about whatever it was.

**The film has hopped from Telluride to Toronto. Are you getting used to promoting a film as a filmmaker and do you enjoy it?**

(Laughs.) I think I'm a bit more relaxed this time around. With *Coriolanus* being the first time out there, I guess I felt a degree of anxiety about how the film would be perceived. I feel a bit more sanguine about it, but again it's still nervy about what the reaction is going to be.

**What kind of reaction would you like *Invisible Woman* to receive?**

I hope people want to see it and I am hoping it gets the sort of response critically and word of mouth where people want to see it. I do think it looks great on the big screen and I'm a great believer in people going to the cinema. So we'll see. **THR**

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# ELI ROTH: 'HOW TORONTO CHANGED MY LIFE'

## SPECIAL FEATURE

*The horror auteur recounts how a last-minute 2002 screening of Cabin Fever launched his career*




I WAS AN UNKNOWN FILMMAKER WITH AN unfinished film, borrowing money from my parents to pay my \$700-a-month rent for a studio apartment on Beachwood Drive. *Cabin Fever* was not finished, and we needed another \$400,000 to mix and make prints. I had submitted the movie to the Toronto Film Festival, and we were told it was rejected. But then something happened where a guy named Colin Geddes (the Midnight Madness programmer) got hold of the tape (yes, the VHS tape of my AVID

edit) and played it. Apparently the main festival had rejected the film, but someone said, “This seems more like Colin’s thing.” Colin loved the film and put us in the festival — dead last. We were so dead-last that the closing-night party was scheduled to end before our film began.

I was ecstatic. Not only did this give us the time we needed to finish the movie but we now had a real shot at selling the film if buyers stuck around till the last day. My producers and I found a group of investors who said

**Illustration by  
KAGAN McLEOD**



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CONGRATULATIONS TO  
**COLIN GEDDES**  
and the whole  
MIDNIGHT MADNESS TEAM

on twenty-five years  
of making people stay up late  
just to give them nightmares!

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LOVE,  
KEITH CALDER AND JESS WU

## 5 FLICKS NOT TO MISS AT MIDNIGHT MADNESS

*Alien abduction, cannibalism, flesh-eating diseases: When the clock strikes 12, it's time to take a break from prestige pics*  
By Borys Kit



### AFFLICTION

This found-footage thriller about a man's mystery illness already has been acquired by CBS Films, E1 and Sony Pictures Worldwide Acquisitions.



### ALMOST HUMAN

The budget for this alien abduction splatter-fest was so tight, director Joe Begos turned to a haunted house attraction for monster costumes.



### GREEN INFERNO

One of the hottest sale properties at the fest, Roth's homage to Italian cannibal movies will give international buyers plenty to chew on.



### OCULUS

Rising horror star Mike Flanagan directed another hot sale title, the supernatural tale of two siblings and their parents' mysterious death.



### THE STATION

Austrian helmer Marvin Kren's cross between *Alien* and *The Thing* already has buyers talking about an English-language remake.

they would put in the last \$400,000 to finish the movie, but they hadn't wired the funds yet. I was sitting on the mixing stage, with the mixer looking at me, waiting for the deposit to hit the account so that we could start. I was on the phone with the investors, saying: "We're in Toronto! We're not gonna get another chance like this!" We sat there for two hours waiting — until finally they agreed to wire the money. It turns out one of the investors was showing the VHS tape to his 12-year-old son, who, 95 minutes later, looked at his dad and said, "This is better than *American Pie*." My career was literally in the hands of a 12-year-old, who, thankfully, liked horror movies. We mixed the film, and I watched the print at the lab then took it with me on the plane to Toronto. This was Sept. 9 — the day before our press screening.

At the time, Midnight Madness was considered some strange sidebar to a very prestigious festival. The films were insane — exactly my taste. I met directors like Vincenzo Natali (*Cube*) and Ryuhei Kitamura (*Midnight Meat Train*). It was a wild introduction to world genre cinema, which at the time was very hard to find in the U.S. I remember the fear that all the buyers were going to go home after the first week of the festival and that no one would be left to see *Cabin Fever* at the Day 10 press screening. I showed the edit of the film to Howard Berger and Greg Nicotero, who kindly had come in and done the makeup effects for next to nothing just to help me out. Howard said it was the best horror movie he'd worked on since *Evil Dead 2*, and he called Harry Knowles at Ain't It Cool News to tell him. Harry called me right away, and even though Harry hadn't seen the film, we were clearly kindred spirits and bonded right away. That night, Harry wrote up his Toronto pre-festival report, and it began by telling buyers not to leave before the end. He told them that although he hadn't seen *Cabin Fever*, he could tell from talking to me that my passion was real and that this could be the R-rated horror film fans had been waiting for. At the time, everything was PG-13, and people told me nobody wanted violent horror films anymore. I was also told by "experts" that an R-rated horror film couldn't make more than \$15 million at the box office, which I knew was nonsense. I always believed if you gave people a great scary time at the movies, they'd come out in droves to see it.

I remember going from the airport to the hotel and getting my badge. It was my first film festival badge, and I still have it. I realized then I could go see any movie I wanted — this badge allowed me to see every press



Roth on the set of *Cabin Fever* in 2001.

screening. I went right to the theater and saw a friend of mine from NYU Film School who was now working in acquisitions at Miramax. He said to me, "Everyone who's seen your film said it's f—ing amazing!" That's when I saw the power of Internet hype — I was literally the sole person who had seen the finished print, by myself, at DeLuxe, yet the buzz was off the charts.

I ignored everyone's warnings to not go to the first press and industry screening and went. No one knew who I was, they just thought I was some blogger in shorts and a T-shirt. I walked up to the mall where the film was playing and saw the line stretching down the hall, out of the theater, into the mall to the escalator. I followed the line and they were all going into the theater playing *Cabin Fever*. I was stunned. I got the last seat. It turns out they started to chain the print with the next theater, so they began a second show 20 minutes later — and a third show after that — all three of which were completely full.

The lights went down and my heart started racing. This was the moment I'd always dreamed about. Was I going to be the next *Spitfire Grill* or *Brothers McMullen*? Was I going to have that festival sale that became part of Toronto lore? Ten minutes into the film, we had sold out the U.K. By the time the credits rolled, I walked out

into a sea of distributors, who swarmed me shouting offers. The bidding war lasted through the night, and by the time we had our Midnight Madness screening four days later, I was able to announce our sale to Lionsgate for \$3.5 million, and \$12 million P&A — the largest screen commitment they had ever done for an acquisition.

I was so exhausted from the bidding and sale that by the time Midnight Madness happened, I was almost too tired to attend. Earlier that night, I ran into a friend who introduced me to Shalom Harlow, the actress. They invited me to go to the *InStyle* party with them, so I went. Shalom looked at me shyly standing at the head of the red carpet. "Is this your first red carpet?" she asked.



Midnight Madness enthusiasts often arrive to screenings in costume — the zombie being an especially popular choice.

CHEERS TO THE MAD GENIUS

# COLIN GEDDES

AND TO 25 YEARS OF  
MIDNIGHT MADNESS

THANKS FOR THE GREAT FILMS  
AND FOR KEEPING US UP WAY PAST  
OUR BEDTIME YEAR AFTER YEAR

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT



**“My career was literally in the hands of a 12-year-old, who, thankfully, liked horror movies.”**

I nodded, like a deer in the headlights. “It’s easy. Come,” she said and took my hand and pulled me down the carpet, posing with me like I was her date. Within hours I was getting phone calls from friends who saw the pictures online, saying “You’re already dating supermodels?!? That was quick!”

I, of course, returned the favor and invited her and all her friends to the Midnight Madness screening. I remember walking with Colin Geddes up to the theater, and he pointed and smiled: The line was wrapped around the block. The theater, the Uptown 1, was a beautiful 2,000-seater, and we stood at the top of the stairs as they opened the doors and the fans ran for the seats. This was always Colin’s favorite part. The geeks almost trounced me as they ran, leaping over one another to get the best seats. I felt like I was at the center of the buffalo stampede in *Dances With Wolves*. The screening was a roaring success — the audience squealed in all the right places. I had licensed five songs from Wes Craven’s *Last House on the Left* for the film, partly because my entire music budget was \$1,500, but mainly because I loved the music so much and was nostalgic for the time when those songs were in mainstream horror movies. The lights went up to wild applause, and I saw a geek with a beard in the front row wearing a *Last House on the Left* T-shirt with tears rolling down his face. He just looked at me and mouthed, “Thank you.” I announced the sale, and went home Monday morning a bonafide director. It was the moment I had worked my whole life for, I couldn’t believe it actually happened the way I dreamed.



Roth on the red carpet with model Harlow in 2002.

*Cabin Fever* captured the biggest sale of the festival that year, and went on to be Lionsgate’s top theatrical grosser of 2003. Colin told me that after that, distributors had the mandate to go to Midnight Madness looking for the next *Cabin Fever*. Suddenly this sidebar wasn’t so fringe — it became the hotspot where everyone went to find the next horror film, be it *Saw*, or *High Tension* or any other new cutting-edge horror movie. Full credit goes to Colin Geddes, who truly has taste and puts together an incredible, diverse program of filmmakers who otherwise might not get the attention they deserve.

It’s hard to measure Colin’s impact on the horror genre. In 2005 I wasn’t going to have *Hostel* finished in time for the festival, so Colin created a special “work in progress” screening for me, and it was the first film to screen digitally there, from a Beta SP projector.

The *Hostel* work-in-progress screening yielded two ambulance calls. One woman left because she thought she was having a heart attack, and another man ran from the theater and fainted on the escalator, tumbling down in front of the entire mall (both were fine, so it’s OK to laugh now).

The screening was appropriately raucous with the rabid Toronto horror fans, and after the Q&A Colin told me what happened. This was the first audience screening ever, and I was thrilled *Hostel* was a “two-ambulance movie.” I of course trumpeted this to every journalist I met, who just laughed and shook their heads saying, “Eli, always hyping his movies like P.T. Barnum. Nice try.” **THR**

## MIDNIGHT MADNESS: A HISTORY

“A haven for weird, deranged filmmakers” is how programmer Colin Geddes describes the Toronto International Film Festival’s Midnight Madness program in its early years.

My, how times have changed.

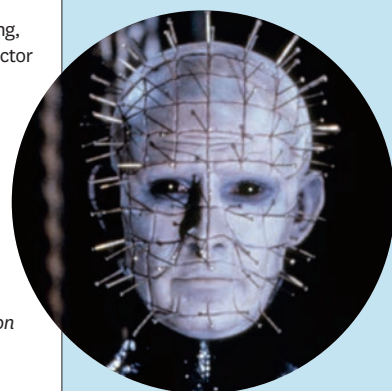
The sidebar, which this year celebrates its 25th year, is easily one of the most popular showcases of the festival and one that probably generates the most noise from its audience.

And one that has Hollywood sales execs staying up ’til the middle of the night.

“Midnight Madness was started to carve out a space for films that were never taken seriously; they were not seen as art,” says Geddes, who is now prepping to unleash his 15th sidebar as programmer. “Now they are the most coveted acquisition titles.”

These are some of the highlights of the past 25 years.

**1988** Piers Handling, then program director of the Toronto International Film Festival, launches Midnight Madness. Among the initial lineup are *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* and *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*.



**1993** The program shows it’s not just about blood and roundhouses as it screens Richard Linklater’s *Dazed and Confused*.

**1995** As the program slowly grows, a new venue is needed and Midnight Madness moves from the Bloor Cinema to the Uptown Theatre.

**2002** Eli Roth premieres his first movie, *Cabin Fever*. With a U.K. distribution deal 10 minutes into the first press screening and a high-priced domestic deal with Lionsgate by the end of the festival, the sidebar now has Hollywood’s attention.



**1997** Colin Geddes is named co-programmer, joining Noah Cowan, then takes it over solo in 1998. Among the titles in ’97: Trey Parker and Matt Stone’s first feature, *Orgazmo*, and Takashi Miike’s *Fudoh: The New Generation*.

**2006** Sacha Baron Cohen arrives on a cart drawn by donkeys and peasant wenches for the premiere of *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*.

**2004** The Ryerson Theatre becomes the new home of the sidebar, just in time to see *Saw* close out the festival.



**2007** Japanese cult director — and Midnight Madness favorite — Takashi Miike (*Audition*) presents his warped take on Sergio Leone, *Sukiyaki Western Django*, co-starring Quentin Tarantino, who five years later makes his own ode to the spaghetti western, *Django Unchained*.

**2011** *You’re Next* and *The Raid* continue to make the sidebar one Hollywood cannot afford to ignore, becoming hot acquisitions.

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## Highlights: Days 1–3

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

#### Emerging Filmmakers Day

Featured Sessions:

#### Moguls: Dede Gardner

1pm–2pm

Glenn Gould Studio

#### Conference Keynote Conversation with Participant Media

3:30pm–5pm

Glenn Gould Studio

Followed by Industry Happy Hour

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

#### Financing

Featured Sessions:

#### Moguls: Alison Thompson

1pm–2pm

Glenn Gould Studio

#### Big Money: Private and Equity Financing

4pm–5pm

Filmmakers' Lounge at

Hyatt Regency Hotel

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

#### Co-Producing

Featured Sessions:

#### Meet the EU Film Funders

10am–11am

Filmmakers' Lounge at

Hyatt Regency Hotel

#### Master Class with John Turturro

1pm–2:30pm

Glenn Gould Studio

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# Cassian Elwes

The indie film vet on his years at William Morris, Hollywood's 'quiet racism' and why luck has nothing to do with success By Pamela McClintock

**W**HEN CASSIAN ELWES EXITED THE William Morris Agency in late May 2009 — a casualty of the merger with Endeavor — he retreated to Lake Tahoe, not sure he'd ever work in the film business again. Having joined the agency 15 years earlier, Elwes had risen through the ranks to become one of Hollywood's premier indie agents, famous for his all-night dealmaking marathons at film festivals. Elwes, 54, did end up returning to the industry after a six-month hiatus and, working outside the cutthroat agency culture, has helped arrange financing for 25 movies in four years — including box office and critical hit Lee Daniels' *The Butler* (his second teaming with Daniels after *The Paperboy*), Robert Redford's *All Is Lost* and *Lawless*. And he's got two high-profile films premiering at Toronto, *Dallas Buyers Club* and *Hateship Loveship*, a drama starring Kristen Wiig, Hailee Steinfeld and Guy Pearce. Among other projects, he just finished shooting *Black and White*, starring Kevin Costner as a grandfather fighting for custody of his biracial granddaughter. Elwes, who in May launched e2b, a financing entity that connects financiers with filmmakers, grew up in England, where he was born into a storied family — he and his brothers Cary, the actor, and Damien, an artist, are distant nephews of King Henry VIII, while their father and grandfather were noted portrait painters before their deaths. His mother, the shipping heiress and interior designer Tessa Kennedy, is now married to filmmaker Elliott Kastner. Elwes has two daughters from his previous marriage to heiress Priscilla Woolworth, Arielle, 23, who works for The Weinstein Co., and Lucie, 21, a senior at Sarah Lawrence.

**You'd been running the independent financing group at William Morris with Rena Ronson before the newly formed WME tapped Graham Taylor to run the unit. Was it difficult leaving?**

It was very hard. I'd never been to Lake Tahoe and I just sat there for a couple of weeks and decompressed. I was very burnt out.

**What were the highlights of your tenure there?**

The 100-year anniversary that they had when they shut down the street around the agency and we were all out there. We just felt like we were really part of something really huge. That's what's incredible to me now that it



doesn't really exist anymore. But at that time, we were just like, "I'm part of something so big" and part of that history of it. [And] I would say *Monster's Ball*, which was very hard to finance because everybody in town said the same thing: You can't make a love story about a black woman [Halle Berry] and a white man [Billy Bob Thornton] or vice versa. There's an inherent, quiet racism in this town. I raced around for a long time, and Lionsgate helped get the movie made in the end. I was in Mexico watching the Oscars when Halle won. It was a very important moment in cinema and the first time that an African-American woman won best actress.

**Do you think Hollywood needs to do a better job making movies targeting African-American audiences?**

*The Butler's* success just shows that the audience is out there and that you can reach it very specifically, that they will turn out for a movie that's good. I've worked on a lot of black films and I'm very proud of them. I worked on *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, which became a huge hit and really put Tyler Perry on the map. And there was obviously *Monster's Ball* and a little movie I loved called *Hav Plenty*. And *The Butler* has just been an amazing, amazing experience.

**Oprah Winfrey stars in *The Butler* opposite Forest Whitaker. Why didn't she invest in the film, considering how hard it was to raise the money?**

Lee felt very strongly about this. He didn't want to change the director-actress dynamic. Everyone worked for very low money and, in exchange, they will get a piece of the end.

**How did you feel when the film opened to \$24.7 million, far more than expected? Now, it's quickly approaching \$100 million.**

Amazing. Amazing. Amazing. I've worked for a long time and people like to think, "Oh, how

lucky is he. *The Butler* was a success and this is great and he just got a lucky." And maybe luck was involved but I've been involved in a lot of movies. You work very hard on a lot of movies that sometimes never see the light of day and are not successful but you think are brilliant. A lot of stars have to align for something like *The Butler* to happen.

**Will any of the *Butler* financiers — including Sheila Johnson, the co-founder of BET, and former NBA player Michael Finley — make more movies?**

I don't know. I think this whole group came together as kind of a one-off. I think [Windy Hill Pictures'] Buddy Patrick from New Orleans will for sure. I would assume they are all being bombarded now with opportunities. I think they all invested because they believed in this movie and thought it could be a commercial success. So for it to happen that way is amazing.

**With Naomi Watts and Robert Pattinson dropping out of Werner Herzog's Gertrude Bell biopic *Queen of the Desert*, is the project dead?**

It's been in casting hell, but we feel like we are coming out of it now. I think we're close to making an announcement.

***Dallas Buyers Club* makes its world premiere in Toronto on Sept. 8. How tough was the role for Matthew McConaughey, who plays Ron Woodruff, an HIV patient who smuggled anti-viral drugs into the United States to help others?**

People have focused on the fact that he lost 41 pounds. That was just the physical aspect. Emotionally, he reaches a place that I've never seen before and I think that if people get to see this performance, they'll recognize that he's unbelievable in the movie. So is Jared Leto, for that matter. People see him now as more of a rock star maybe, but as an actor he's fantastic. **THR**

EVERY MAN HAS A DESTINY

# HERCULES

THE LEGEND BEGINS



# REVIEWS



From left: The WikiLeaks team of Cumberbatch, Carice van Houten, Bruhl and Moritz Bleibtreu watch video of a Baghdad airstrike.

## The Fifth Estate

Bill Condon's look at WikiLeaks centers on the falling out between Julian Assange and a key ally BY JOHN DEFORE

WHITTILING THE LOGISTICAL SPRAWL AND MORAL swamp of WikiLeaks into the story of a falling out between two intimate partners, Bill Condon's *The Fifth Estate* views site founder Julian Assange largely through the eyes of Daniel Domscheit-Berg, his German spokesperson in the period leading up to the 2010 release of the "Iraq War Logs." Of necessity the film plays less like the director's earlier ones involving real-world subjects (*Kinsey*, *Gods and Monsters*) than like *The Social Network*: Here again we have an Internet phenomenon that has changed the world, created by a polarizing, psychologically opaque man accused of betraying those around him. The comparison isn't flattering to *Fifth Estate*, which, though it traffics in life and death and threats to the world's great institutions, isn't always as gripping as a film whose main drama was who'd get rich over letting "friends" share party pictures. Though it will attract attention at the box office, it is unlikely to appeal broadly to moviegoers who, one suspects, have never been as worked up about WikiLeaks as journalists and governments are.

The most compelling thing here by far is the film's vision of Assange, by all accounts a man of enormous self-regard and slippery ethics. Benedict Cumberbatch has the character in hand from the start — his way of brushing into another's space and making it his office, of not seeing others unless they're reflecting back some of the energy he emits, of elevating himself by making others' concerns sound trivial. The actor brings extra ambiguity to scenes in which Assange is ostensibly opening up to people; only once (when activist associates in Kenya are killed) do his emotions seem untainted by manipulative play-acting.

When Assange and Daniel Berg (Daniel Bruhl) first meet at a hacker convention, the younger man is flattered to have the opportunity to spread awareness of a site he believes in. Bringing Assange

to a party house in Berlin, he hopes to talk about its operations when his new friend takes things online: The two sit in a quiet corner with laptops open, typing chat messages back and forth instead of speaking.

Lines from the chat are projected across the actors' faces, the only really smirk-worthy device Condon uses in a film hoping to animate online activity. Later sequences, which use innumerable headlines receding into the distance to show how leaks propagate online, are simply uninspired — unable to capture WikiLeaks' startling impact visually.

The film does a more evocative job with the amorphous nature of the site's internal operations, visualizing all its hundreds of volunteers — be they in Internet cafes, bedrooms or (as Berg often is) hiding in a supply closet at work — as connected in a vast virtual office. The rows upon rows of desks may evoke a 1960s steno pool more than a 21st century workplace, but the metaphor is useful — especially in the dramatic moment when Berg learns that all the other volunteers he has worked with on the site are actually just Assange, speaking through different e-mail accounts.

Yes: Though the publisher boasted of a vast army of techies bent on spreading secrets, *Fifth Estate* says that for some time Assange and Berg — and one computer server — were the entire team. The knowledge generates intense loyalty on Berg's part, but he's smart enough to know they need help: Using some savings, he buys a stack of servers and stashes them across Europe so they all can't be seized or shut down at once.

Berg brings others into the inner circle, leading to his first clash with his control-freak partner. Things go seriously bad later, as they negotiate with *The Guardian* and other old-media outlets to jointly release troves of military and diplomatic documents leaked by Bradley Manning. (David Thewlis, playing veteran reporter Nick Davies, embodies the wise bridge between the sensibilities of respectable journalism and indiscriminate revelation.) Though Assange covets the boost in exposure this publication will bring, Berg is shocked to find that he doesn't intend to honor his promise to redact names and other identifying information from the highly sensitive cables. The film intends this conflict to stir debate over the degrees of secrecy that are required in free societies, but it comes across more as a clash of personalities. The film sides with Berg, whose brand of idealism is less concerned with dramatic, attention-getting gestures than with producing a righteous result.

Showing the far other side of the coin, *Fifth Estate* offers some composite characters in the U.S. State Department (played by Laura Linney and Stanley Tucci) who must try to squash leaks and scramble to protect operatives about to be exposed. This side of the film feels perfunctory, and while some tension is generated by a sequence following a Libyan source trying to evade arrest, the scenes don't add much to Berg and Assange's impassioned debates over the value of secret operatives' lives versus those of the civilians killed in the wars they wage.

### Gala Presentation

Cast Benedict Cumberbatch, Daniel Bruhl, Anthony Mackie, David Thewlis, Peter Capaldi, Carice van Houten, Stanley Tucci, Laura Linney

Director Bill Condon

128 minutes

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**IN THEATERS 2014**

# Labor Day

Kate Winslet and Josh Brolin smolder in director Jason Reitman's hot-house hostage romance BY TODD MCCARTHY



Winslet and Brolin do career-best work in *Labor Day*.

The nowadays seldom-visited Hollywood women's picture receives an intelligent and emotionally potent modern treatment in *Labor Day*. On the basis of *Juno*, *Up in the Air*, *Young Adult* and now his work here with Kate Winslet, Jason Reitman is arguably unsurpassed as a contemporary American director of actresses, and his work overall on this simple but delicate story of a lonely single mother's quickly blossoming romance with an escaped convict is skillfully modulated. Told from the point of view of the woman's vulnerable son, this Christmas Day release from Paramount should be promotable to solid returns on the basis of its offbeat story and heart-tugging appeal.

Adapted by Reitman from the fine 2009 novel by Joyce Maynard, the story hinges on the elemental appeal of witnessing a formerly vibrant and sensual woman, long since withered emotionally and sexually by abandonment and a related trauma, being reawakened by a strong and confident, albeit deeply flawed, man. This process, which unfolds rapidly over the course of a long holiday weekend, is framed by the insecurities but also admiring perspective of the 13-year-old son, who learns a lot from the interloper but is fearful of becoming the odd man out.

Adele (Winslet), an unkempt, pushing-40 beauty, lives with son Henry (Gattlin Griffith) in a similarly untended-to house in small-

town 1987 New England (New Hampshire in the novel, Massachusetts here). Reitman, with crucial assistance from the low-keyed underscoring of composer Rolfe Kent, keeps the suspense at a purposeful low boil throughout the early going as the brutishly handsome and powerfully built Frank (Josh Brolin) politely but firmly approaches the pair in a large convenience store and insists they give him a ride.

Bleeding from several places and clearly desperate, the goateed Frank is an intriguing but unsettling mix of gentlemanly and threatening, meaning that Adele and Henry are tense but not panicky upon learning that he was injured when he jumped out of the second-story hospital window at the prison where he was serving 18 years for murder. It's clear virtually from his entrance that this is the best film role Brolin has had since *No Country for Old Men* and maybe ever, and he makes the most of it.

The fugitive at first ties Adele up for appearances' sake and quickly begins to ingratiate himself by fixing the place up, repairing the car, teaching the sports-hating Henry about baseball and, most of all, by cooking. The ultimate man-about-the-house, Frank first gives the bound Adele a little charge by slowly hand-feeding her a little something he's thrown together.

But this is nothing compared to when he engages his increasingly cooperative hosts

in making from scratch the world's greatest peach pie, a process elaborately detailed with an emphasis on the erotic potential of mutually squeezing and mashing bowls full of fruit by hand and massaging and folding the crust. The way Frank looks at, talks to and touches Adele has the desired effect and it only takes two nights for the hormonally erupting Henry to overhear his mother being joined by a man in her bedroom for the first time.

All this could have been overdone to obvious, even gross effect, but Reitman keeps a strong grip on all the aspects of the story to prevent it from becoming corny, unduly melodramatic or obvious. There are little contrivances, such as the nosy neighbors and Frank's presumed sexual prowess despite having had an appendectomy two days earlier, but the elemental truths easily dominate under the director's watchful eye.

Quickly, then, the story turns from being one of kidnappers and hostages to one of lovers determined to find a way to escape together. The fly in the ointment is Henry, who is supposed to start school on the Tuesday after Labor Day and whose initial fear of being traded by his mother to his departed father's new family might crack the necessary secrecy of their flight.

The film emits frequent pangs of emotion and tension, which enable it to prevail over threats from the clichés and inevitabilities of the story's format. There is more than one instance when events will cause many viewers' hearts to leap, as they say, into their throats, and the wrap-up is quietly satisfying.

Managing to look both frumpy and alluring, and summoning will and desire from inside a somewhat worn exterior in the manner of her fine recent work as Mildred Pierce (another pie maker!), Winslet outstandingly reveals the numerous ways Adele is pulled emotionally by the sudden eventfulness of her life after all these years. Winslet has always been good at portraying the embrace of romance and sex, but this is augmented by the gradual revelation, in crisp flashbacks using younger actors, that brought her to the point of having signed off on love.

Tobey Maguire narrates the proceedings as an older Henry looking back, only to be briefly seen at the end pursuing his chosen calling. After this and *The Great Gatsby*, however, the actor should forgo any further passive observer characters for fear of being forever neutered. Young Griffith is excellent playing Henry as a boy.

Production values are modest and everything they need to be.

## Special Presentation

**Cast** Kate Winslet, Josh Brolin, Gattlin Griffith, Tobey Maguire, Clark Gregg, J.K. Simmons, Brooke Smith, James Van Der Beek

**Director** Jason Reitman // 111 minutes

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# 12 Years a Slave

Steve McQueen's slave drama starring Chiwetel Ejiofor and Michael Fassbender is an involving but at times overstated telling of an extraordinary life story

BY TODD MCCARTHY

The recent popular revenge fantasy *Django Unchained* notwithstanding, there have been so few good and strong films about slavery in America that, for this reason alone, *12 Years a Slave* stands quite tall. With director Steve McQueen dedicating himself to detailing the “peculiar institution” with as many dreadful particulars as he can, Chiwetel Ejiofor leads a fine cast with a superior performance as the real-life Solomon Northup, a free black man from New York who was kidnapped in 1841 and sold into Southern slavery until being miraculously rescued. Perhaps the nature of the story is such that the film can't help but be obvious and quite melodramatic at times, but it gets better as it goes along and builds to a moving finish. Despite the upsetting and vivid brutality, Fox Searchlight has a winner here that will generate copious media coverage, rivet the attention of the black public, stir much talk in political and educational circles and appeal to film audiences who crave something serious and different.

Northup published a memoir of his 12-year nightmare in 1853, the year after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* came out, and it was so successful that he went on to participate in two stage adaptations. The book dropped from sight in the 20th century, but the movie tie-in will certainly reestablish its virtually unique status as a work by an educated free man who managed to return from slavery.

British director McQueen, whose striking first two features, *Hunger* and *Shame*, remained restricted to the art film world, paints on a much bigger canvas and with a much broader brush here, befitting a subject that defined the structure of American society before the Civil War. The nature of the outrage, villainy and human suffering on display is entirely genuine if also familiar, but it is never far removed

from the direct experiences of Northup, who, near the beginning of his ordeal, decides, “I don't want to survive, I want to live.”

This means getting back to Saratoga, N.Y., where he has lived with his wife and children in well-to-do fashion until Northup, who plays the violin, is induced by two self-described entertainers to join them in Washington, D.C., to make some quick money. They get him drunk and he wakes up in chains and, soon enough, is on a boat to Louisiana, where he is renamed Platt Hamilton by a slave trader (Paul Giamatti) and sold to plantation owner Ford (Benedict Cumberbatch).

That any of this could happen seems shocking, of course, but it was not uncommon in the years after the federal government banned the import of any further slaves. One of the most wrenching occurrences in any slave-era narrative is the forced separation of parents from children and this happens in Platt's group to mother Eliza (Adepero Oduye), who almost never stops crying about it thereafter.

A cultivated religious man, Ford is impressed by Platt's intelligence and fiddle playing, which arouses the ire of Platt's immediate boss Tibeats (Paul Dano), who provokes Platt to the point that the black man savagely beats him. To save Platt from revenge, Ford sells him to cotton plantation owner Edwin Epps (Michael Fassbender, the star of McQueen's first two films), who, like *Uncle Tom's* Simon Legree, believes he can break slaves of any defiant or hopeful thoughts.

Up to this point, Northup/Platt is pretty strictly seen as a simmering victim, while the whites, with the exception of Ford, are mercenary businessmen at best and outright villains at worst, figures little different from the caricatures that have come down through the years in books and films. There are grace notes, to be



Plantation owner Ford (Cumberbatch, left) is impressed by Northup's (Ejiofor) fiddle playing.

sure, such as when the relatively enlightened Ford reads from the Bible to family members and slaves together.

But it is only at about the one-hour mark that matters deepen and therefore become more interesting. Fassbender's Epps (a real person who, later in life, read Northup's book and declared that what he wrote was basically the truth) initially seems like the most evil creature in the South, a drunk prone to administering severe whippings and having his way sexually with slave women, notably the slender Patsey (a very fine Lupita Nyong'o), whom Platt also befriends.

However, Fassbender reaches down to make him a more complex creation, a sometimes shrewd observer of character in a tortured marriage with a wife (Sarah Paulson, superb) who belittles him as a eunuch in front of the slaves and takes out her hatred on Patsey. The latter, in turn, begins to ask the impossible of Platt, of whom Epps becomes suspicious of trying to send messages to the outside world, which, in fact, he is.

In the end, it's only the chance arrival of an itinerant Canadian carpenter, Samuel Bass (Brad Pitt), who with Platt will put up a new building on Epps' plantation, that provides the slave with the hope of an escape. An ardent abolitionist given to universal truths rather than local notions, Bass is not afraid to argue with Epps or rouse his ire by saying things like, “There is a fearful ill resting upon this nation.” Although he's been betrayed by many a white man before, Platt takes a chance by entrusting his fate to this seemingly sincere fellow.

Quite a few scenes, of Platt's

near-lynching and some others' actual hangings, of terrific whippings and other punishments, are pretty rough. The everyday drudgery and misery of plantation life and the arbitrariness with which slaves are moved around are readily apparent and, the sentiments of the likes of Bass to the side, there is not a whiff of any change to come apparent to anyone. This particular story may have, after a fashion, a happy and inspiring ending, but very few other slave lives did.

Ejiofor is terrific in a demanding character who's put through the wringer physically, mentally and emotionally. One feels his determination to get back to his family at all times even though he doesn't talk about it, and toward the end there is an unusual extended close-up of him in which he looks out toward the unknown future as his eyes express a quicksilver array of emotions, from wonder to fear to hope.

Louisiana location work provides the perfect heated setting for a story expertly physicalized by production designer Adam Stockhausen, costume designer Patricia Norris and cinematographer Sean Bobbitt. Hans Zimmer's score combines with occasional religious music sung by the slaves to provide effective backgrounding, but students of the composer's work will quickly realize that the main chord progression here is almost precisely the same as the central one he used on what may be his greatest soundtrack, that for *Inception*.

**Cast** Chiwetel Ejiofor, Michael Fassbender, Benedict Cumberbatch, Paul Dano, Paul Giamatti  
**Director** Steve McQueen  
134 minutes

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**PARADIGM**

## Little Feet

Alexandre Rockwell's children star as quasi-orphans wandering the streets of L.A. on their own BY JOHN DEFORE

A micro-budgeted delight that could have been made at the dawn of the Sundance indie boom, *Little Feet* finds one of that scene's participants, Alexandre Rockwell, imagining his own children as near-orphans fending for themselves on a day-long mission through Los Angeles. Commercial prospects are hobbled by an hour-long running time, but few who see the picture will fail to be charmed; word of mouth will be good if, perhaps paired with a simpatico short, it makes its way into non-fest arthouse bookings.

Lana and Nico Rockwell play Lana and Nico, whose unnamed father dresses in a funny-animal suit for a living and collapses drunk upon getting home from work. "How did Mommy die?" is the film's first whispered line of

dialogue, and the children devote much of their imagination to ways she may still be present: They see her underwater in the bathtub, as a feather in the air.

These half-conversations are more spiritually curious than mournful, in line with their response to another death: When one of two pet fish dies, the children worry less over grieving than about how to get the survivor to a river where he might find happiness. Having missed their bus to school, they wander around Echo Park looking for the river — soon enlisting neighbor Nene (Rene Cuante-Bautista) and decorating an abandoned shopping cart to carry Curly's fishbowl to freedom.

"Wanna see somethin' cool?" is the recurring refrain in a story as susceptible to fun diversions



Rockwell wrote the screenplay with his daughter Lana.

and detail-obsessed projects as its heroes. Episodes in which the kids try on funny costumes or chase each other around are accompanied by perfectly chosen oldies that — along with David Walter Lech's gorgeously grainy black-and-white photography — throw off any ties the film might have to the here and now.

Moviegoers may be reminded of the kid-created reality of last year's (far more ambitious) *Beasts of the Southern Wild*. But at heart the film might be closer to one like Truffaut's *Small Change*, which put unsupervised young-

sters in situations they shouldn't be in and suggested they were more than capable of surviving. One assumes Rockwell is a much better father than the one here, but in making this film he seems to be confronting a parent's greatest fear and assuring himself that, yes, his kids will be just fine when he's not around.

### Contemporary World Cinema

**Cast** Lana Rockwell, Nico Rockwell, Rene Cuante-Bautista

**Director-Producer-Editor:**

Alexandre Rockwell  
59 minutes



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# The Wind Rises

Animation master Hayao Miyazaki delivers a searing vision of Japan between the wars, told through the eyes of a young aviation engineer BY DEBORAH YOUNG

After the extraordinary adventures of *Porco Rosso* and *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea*, revered animation wizard Hayao Miyazaki has become the numero uno Japanese animator at Western fests; his mere name in the title cards, along with his Ghibli studio, brings on a round of applause. The ambitious *The Wind Rises* is something of a special case that will divide audiences into two camps, those who find it an unforgettably poetic ode to life, and those who tune out to its slow-moving second act, which can wear down the patience of even the well-disposed. On the other hand, the daring subject — the engineering of war planes by the Axis powers for use in World War II — is so honestly handled it

should not present a problem for Western viewers.

The amazingly detailed, somewhat old-school visuals instantly immerse viewers in the dream world of Jiro (Hideaki Anno), a self-effacing boy who becomes a brilliant aeronautics engineer. The character is based on the real-life Jiro Horikoshi, the man who designed Japan's Zero fighter, used against Pearl Harbor and in kamikaze operations.

Early scenes depict the 1923 earthquake that devastated Tokyo and Yokohama. It was followed by a firestorm and typhoon, all frighteningly rendered as college-bound Jiro travels on a train. In these pre-war years, Jiro gets a job and is quickly promoted by the chief engineers at Mitsubishi



Miyazaki's animation studio announced Sept. 1 that *The Wind Rises* would be his final film.

to head the project design for a new fighter plane. Though it may not be the sexiest subject for an animation film, Miyazaki injects drama and quiet heroism into Jiro's struggles with the slide-rule.

When it comes, the war remains offscreen, except for a chilling final vision of vapor trails clawing the air above ugly dark clouds, and below them a cemetery of fallen planes. "Not a single plane came back," says Jiro disconsolately. "That's what it means to lose a war." This attitude of regret, but not apology, makes *The Wind Rises* a very hon-

est film from a great artist.

Jiro's professional rise parallels his love story with the delicate Nahoko, a victim of the tuberculosis epidemic. Their courtship and Nahoko's illness take center stage in the second half, where the film begins to lose focus.

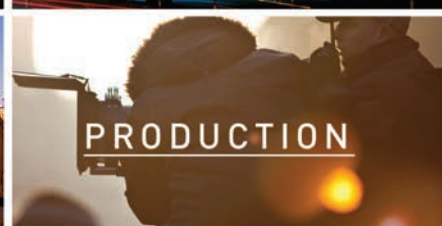
The title comes from an oft-quoted poem by Paul Valery, which simply recites: "The wind is rising. We must try to live."

## Special Presentation

Cast Hideaki Anno, Miori Takimoto

Director-Screenwriter

Hayao Miyazaki // 126 minutes



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# Invisible Woman

Ralph Fiennes directs and stars opposite Felicity Jones in his drama centered on Charles Dickens' affair with a younger woman BY TODD MCCARTHY

Period biographical dramas don't come much better than *The Invisible Woman*, an exceptionally involving and credible portrayal of the "whispered" relationship Charles Dickens maintained with a much younger woman over the last 13 years of his life. A career high point for Ralph Fiennes as both an actor and director, this unfussy and emotionally penetrating work also provides lead actress Felicity Jones with the prime role in which she abundantly fulfills the promise suggested in some of her earlier small films. After high-profile festival exposure in Telluride, Toronto and New York, this looks like ideal fare for Sony Classics to push toward a warm audience embrace in specialized release beginning in December.

Not at all a starchy and decorous affair, the film has a lived-in feel that is informed by Fiennes, in both his artistic capacities, with the gusto, energy and turbulence one associates with Dickens himself. Working with an intelligent and shrewdly structured script by Abi Morgan (*Shame*, *The Iron Lady*), Fiennes quickly establishes the vastness of the great author's world — his artistic eminence, popularity as both a writer and public speaker, father of 10, tireless worker on behalf of society's destitute — as well as his Victorian-era reticence to embark upon an extramarital affair despite his now-empty marriage to a wife who can't begin to keep up with him physically or intellectually; as he tellingly remarks on one of his vigorous country hikes (a line repeated later in her life by his mistress), "I walk at quite a pace."

Meeting Ellen "Nelly" Ternan in 1857 when she's come with her theatrical mother (Kristin Scott Thomas) and sisters to perform in a Manchester production of his play *The Frozen Deep*, the 45-year-old Dickens is immediately struck by the 18-year-old's beauty and poise. "She has something," observes the bushy-haired and goateed author, a dynamo portrayed by Fiennes as an almost constantly erupting geyser of creativity and a contagious enthusiast.

Noting her husband's interest, his wife, Catherine (Joanna Scanlan), who has become extremely large in middle age but retains an almost angelic face, engages Nelly in talk of her husband's work — the young woman likes *Little Dorrit* — and it seems that both the author's moral temperament and his fame restrain him from easily acting on his impulses; he's so well-known that it would be hard to keep any secrets from the press and scandal in his position is to be avoided at all costs.

More interesting, however, and more difficult to dramatize is Nelly's own reticence. Well raised and very close to her mother, she has career aspirations as well as a strong moral sense and a fixed idea of propriety. Only a tidal wave of a man such as Dickens could likely ever have broken down her reserve and, even when Dickens has left his wife, she has trouble understanding what her new role in life is supposed to be, given that the relationship must remain clandestine. In Morgan's no doubt conjectural conception of the woman's emotional growth, it takes Nelly many years, and a later marriage to a younger man, to come to terms with her longtime shadow existence.

In the early stages of their acquaintanceship, Dickens and Nelly are almost always surrounded by others in public places or with family members. A pivotal and brilliantly conceived scene is set late at night in Dickens's study after a very successful charity event. It becomes the first quasi-intimate talk between the two, one in which the author subtly reveals his true feelings for the girl, but it's all conducted with Nelly's mother sleeping — or perhaps only resting and overhearing everything — on a nearby lounge. Morgan's pointed but natural dialogue writing here is superb, as it is in another great interlude shortly thereafter in which Mrs. Dickens quietly lets Nelly know she's aware of what's going on, even if nothing really is yet.



Fiennes and Jones engage in a May-December romance.

When the relationship finally is consummated, director Fiennes exhibits a restraint entirely in keeping with the nature of the times and story, forgoing typical pawing, groping and heavy breathing in favor of a rather brief but highly effective indication of a sexual breakthrough. This sort of visual economy is also applied to two big set pieces — no doubt an example of making a virtue of financial constraints — first in a beautifully composed scene set at a big horse race, and even more impressively when the couple are among the many victims of a (true life) train accident on a trip from Paris back to England.

However Charles Dickens and Nelly Ternan might have been judged at the time or may be even today by viewers, *The Invisible Woman* does an exemplary job of making the audience see and understand their relationship from the perspective of each of them. Although based on a 1990 book by Claire Tomalin, there must be considerable invention in the screenplay, since, as is illustrated in a shocking scene, Dickens burned virtually all his correspondence that made any mention of his lover. (The relationship was previously the subject of Simon Gray's 2007 play *Little Nell*.)

The complexity of a great man's career merges here with a young woman's agitated struggle to redefine her role in life to create a richly satisfying dramatic repast. Fiennes charges Dickens with an engaging vitality that sweeps up everyone in his vicinity but is checked by a prudent moral sense that makes his percolating personality something distinct from generalized lust for life.

Luminous and thoughtful, socially composed and yet often troubled and distracted by the moral and social reorientation her life's surprising course has taken, Jones is simply superb in a complex role. The other standout is the hitherto unknown Scanlon as a clear-sighted but simple woman who, one can infer, was an endlessly supportive and understanding wife and a fine mother but is now entirely incapable of giving her husband what he needs or of competing with Nelly. Her breakdown is devastating.

After his uneven directorial debut with *Coriolanus*, Fiennes is on top of every aspect of this film, which benefits from agile and eye-catching cinematography by Robert Hardy and production design by Maria Djurkovic and costumes by Michael O'Connor that richly evoke the era. Ilan Eshkeri's score is another plus.

## Special Presentation

Cast Ralph Fiennes, Felicity Jones, Kristin Scott Thomas, Tom Hollande

Director Ralph Fiennes

111 minutes



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Bro (left) and Asbaek indulge their every whim.



## Sex, Drugs & Taxation

Danish director Christoffer Boe tells the true story of a travel tycoon and his attorney BY JOHN DEFORE

A movie the Tea Party might go nuts for — if only all of the naked ladies, erect phalluses and other happy hedonism could be expunged — Christoffer Boe's *Sex, Drugs & Taxation* is the (mostly?) true story of a fine-print-loving family man who made his company millions by legally maneuvering its tax rate to zero. Things don't go so well for Mogens Glistrup in the end, but the story of his friendship with travel-agency mogul Simon Spies is often good fun; it'll be a bit involved for many art house patrons, but those with a taste for droll Danish misbehavior will embrace it.

Few films in recent memory have revolved around a pair of leads this physically unpalatable: Mogens (Nicolas Bro), a tax attorney, is rotund with an oily combover; Simon (Pilou Asbaek) spends most of the film sporting a beard as unstoppable as his libido.

Boe and co-screenwriter Simon Pasternak drop us right into some corporate maneuvering that takes a while to make sense of, but it's clear the fat man is on to something: By exploiting Section-this and Paragraph-thus-and-such of Spies' contract with a supplier, the travel agent will be able to buy the company he rents planes from for next to nothing. Simon now has the profit margin, but needs to publicize his vacation packages to Majorca. Having always had a fondness for prostitutes, he decides to make his sexual escapades very public: After renting out a whole bordello and having the owner tip off the press, he lines all its women up naked on the floor and gives each one a go, assembly-line style.

From there, the only direction to go is psychedelic hermitude: Asbaek shifts from the fiendish eyes of early Simon to the stupor of a man paying "doctors" to fill him with narcotics. Meanwhile, Mogens takes to the airwaves to argue that anyone can use his tax-avoidance tactics, and the schemer's inevitable troubles with the law soon lose him his best friend. The fall from grace is spiced up by Mogens' attempt to start a political party that would dismantle every government in sight. This nonsense earned more public support than expected — aren't the Scandinavians supposed to be smarter than we are? — but that doesn't avert the humiliation *Taxation* has in store for a hero who felt like an underdog even on top of the world.

### Vanguard

**Cast** Pilou Asbaek, Nicolas Bro, Jesper Christensen

**Director** Christoffer Boe // 115 minutes

## Why Don't You Play in Hell

Japanese genre master Sion Sono is back with a madcap salute to cinema and yakuza BY DEBORAH YOUNG

There is something inherently satisfying in pairing gangsters and moviemakers. While we await a serious film treatment of the subject, there are comic gems that point out their affinity, like the Hong Kong comedy *Vulgar*, about a producer who stoops to the unthinkable to make a porn film for the leader of a triad gang. That is a sophisticated work compared to *Why Don't You Play in Hell?* Totally outrageous but surprisingly successful on its own terms, this wild melange of yakuza wars and student filmmaking marks Japanese veteran Sion Sono's return to the *Suicide Club* genre, with farcical teenage rom com thrown in as an extra. Festival fans of his two vivid auteur dramas on the Fukushima tragedy, *Himizu* and *The Land of Hope*, will have some adjusting to do.

The film's reputed similarity to *Kill Bill* is more a question of tone than substance. One can imagine Quentin Tarantino enjoying the way Sono succeeds in turning silliness into a heartfelt salute to old-fashioned 35mm moviemaking, without forgoing a tongue-in-cheek bloodbath that leaves the film set littered with severed limbs and spurting arteries. After its bow in Venice Horizons (a bit of a stretch) and Toronto's Midnight Madness, it should barrel through more fests before hitting home video. Drafthouse Films has acquired North American rights.

In this update on a pre-digital age screenplay Sono wrote 17 years ago, the story of the "F-Bombers," a group of irresponsible film nerds led by would-be director Hirata (Hiroki Hasegawa), bids a fond farewell to 35mm. However, their guerrilla filmmaking antics, encouraged by an old projectionist, soon grow stale even after they annex Sasaki, a young wannabe gangster, as their "new Bruce Lee."

Meanwhile, a yakuza clan



Nikaido stars as a woman with a score to settle.

stages a bloody ambush on the home of rival boss Muto, played to deadpan perfection by the wonderful character actor Jun Kunimura (*Hard Boiled*, *Outrage*). His wife happens to be in the kitchen chopping carrots, and goes on a rampage knifing all the hit men. The only survivor is the good-looking Ikegama (Shinichi Tsutsumi), who is bleeding profusely when little Mitsuko, the Mutos' 10-year-old daughter appears. Ikegama is smitten with a pedophile infatuation that will last until he next sees her, 10 years later, as the prettiest, sexiest, meanest girl in Japan (played with bold verve by an unrecognizable but devastatingly funny Fumi Nikaido, the award-winning young actress from *Himizu*).

Despite its trashy humor, which sometimes seems a bit too exotic to be funny, the film has unquestionably well-done scenes that cover a variety of genres. The lighting and tech work has a fast and furious look to it, and editing sometimes feels like anything goes. The music track, whose recurring sound gag is the repeated use of Handel's stately sarabande of *Barry Lyndon* fame, is as varied as the rest.

### Midnight Madness

**Cast** Jun Kunimura, Shinichi Tsutsumi, Hiroki Hasegawa, Gen Hoshino, Fumi Nikaido

**Director-Screenwriter**

Sion Sono

119 minutes

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# FESTIVAL SCREENING GUIDE

## TODAY

**8:15 AM *Attila Marcel***, Cinema 2, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation

**8:30 AM *The Railway Man***, Cinema 1, Press & Industry 1, Gala Presentation; ***September***, Cinema 5 - NBCUniversal Cinema, Press & Industry 1, City to City; ***Watermark***, Scotiabank 11, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation

**8:45 AM *People in Places***, Scotiabank 7, Press & Industry 1, Vanguard; ***Violette***, Scotiabank 4, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***What Is Cinema?***, Scotiabank 9, Press & Industry 1, Mavericks

**9:00 AM *Border***, Scotiabank 5, Press & Industry 1, Discovery; ***Paradise***, Scotiabank 10, Press & Industry 1, Discovery; ***Parkland***, Scotiabank 3, Press & Industry 1, Gala Presentation; ***To Repel Ghosts: Urban Tales From the African Continent***, Jackman Hall, Public 2, Contemporary World Cinema; ***Unforgiven***, Scotiabank 14, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation

**9:15 AM *Hateship Loveship***, Scotiabank 2, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***Salvation Army***, Scotiabank 8, Press & Industry 1, Discovery

**9:30 AM *12 Years a Slave***, Scotiabank 1, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***All About the Feathers***, Scotiabank 6, Press & Industry 1, Discovery; ***Horns***, Scotiabank 13, Press & Industry 1, Vanguard; ***Palo Alto***, The Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, Public 2, Discovery

**9:45 AM *Faith Connections***, Cinema 3, Public 2, TIFF Docs; ***Wild Duck***, Isabel Bader Theatre, Public 2, City to City

**10:00 AM *Alternate Financing: The Road Less Travelled***, Filmmakers' Lounge - Industry Conference Room, Press & Industry, Industry Programming

**10:30 AM *The Past***, Cinema 2, Public 2, Special Presentation

**10:45 AM *L'intrepido***, Scotiabank 7, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***Southcliffe***, Scotiabank 9, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation

**11:00 AM *The Amazing Catfish***, Scotiabank 11, Press & Industry 1, Discovery; ***The Railway Man***, Visa Screening Room (Elgin), Public 2, Gala Presentation

**11:15 AM *The Daughter***, Scotiabank 5, Press & Industry 1, City to City; ***Eastern Boys***, Scotiabank 8, Press & Industry 1, Contemporary World Cinema; ***Love is the Perfect Crime***, Scotiabank 3, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***Lucky Them***, Cinema 1, Public 2, Special Presentation

**11:30 AM *12 Years a Slave***, Ryerson Theatre, Public 2, Special Presentation; ***Around the Block***, Scotiabank 10, Press & Industry 1, Discovery; ***Dallas Buyers Club***, Scotiabank 2, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***Financing and Packaging - From Indie to Studio***, Filmmakers' Lounge - Industry Conference Room, Press & Industry, Industry Programming

**11:45 AM *The Last of Robin Hood***, Scotiabank 14, Public 2, Special Presentation; ***Life's a Breeze***, Scotiabank 6, Press & Industry 1, Contemporary World Cinema; ***Palo Alto***, Scotiabank 4, Press & Industry 1, Discovery

**12:00 PM *Prisoners***, Princess of Wales, Public 2, Special Presentation

**12:15 PM *Cold Eyes***, Scotiabank 13, Press & Industry 1, Gala Presentation; ***Only Lovers Left Alive***, The Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, Public 2, Special Presentation

**12:30 PM *Bad Words***,

Scotiabank 1, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***The Fifth Estate***, Winter Garden Theatre, Public 3, Gala Presentation; ***Hateship Loveship***, Isabel Bader Theatre, Public 2, Special Presentation

**12:45 PM *Antboy***, Cinema 3, Public 1, TIFF Kids; ***Le Joli Mai (The Lovely Month of May)***, Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah Atkinson Family Cinema, Public 1, TIFF Cinematheque

**1:00 PM *At Berkeley***, Jackman Hall, Public 1, TIFF Docs; ***Moguls: Alison Thompson***, Glenn Gould Studio, Press & Industry, Industry Programming

**1:15 PM *October November***, Scotiabank 7, Press & Industry 1, Contemporary World Cinema; ***A Promise***, Scotiabank 11, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation

**1:30 PM *Supermensch The Legend of Shep Gordon***, Roy Thomson Hall, Public 1, Gala Presentation

**1:45 PM *Miss Violence***, Scotiabank 5, Press & Industry 1, City to City; ***Violette***, Cinema 2, Public 2, Special Presentation

**2:00 PM *Blue is the Warmest Color***, Scotiabank 4, Public 2, Special Presentation; ***Finding Vivian Maier***, Scotiabank 8, Press & Industry 1, TIFF Docs; ***Finishers, The***, Cinema 1, Public 1, Special Presentation; ***Lucky Them***, Scotiabank 10, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***Militant, The***, Scotiabank 6, Press & Industry 1, Discovery

**2:15 PM *Gravity***, Scotiabank 2, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***Palestine Stereo***, Scotiabank 14, Public 2, Contemporary World Cinema

**2:30 PM *Beyond the Edge***, Scotiabank 9, Press & Industry 1, TIFF Docs; ***Enough Said***, Visa Screening Room (Elgin),



Public 1, Special Presentation; ***Micro-Budget Realities, Filmmakers' Lounge*** - Industry Conference Room, Press & Industry, Industry Programming

**2:45 PM *Ilo Ilo***, Scotiabank 13, Public 2, Discovery

**3:00 PM *Dark Matter of Love, The***, Cinema 3, Public 1, TIFF Docs; ***In Conversation With... Irrfan Khan***, Glenn Gould Studio, Public 1, Mavericks; ***You Are Here***, Ryerson Theatre, Public 1, Special Presentation

**3:30 PM *Therese***, Princess of Wales, Public 1, Special Presentation; ***Week-end, Le***, Isabel Bader Theatre, Public 1, Special Presentation

**3:45 PM *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom***, Scotiabank 1, Press & Industry 1, Gala Presentation; ***Qissa***, Scotiabank 7, Press & Industry 1, Contemporary World Cinema

**4:00 PM *All About the Feathers***, Scotiabank 11, Public 2, Discovery; ***Bad Words***, The Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, Public 2, Special Presentation; ***Big Money: Private and Equity Financing***, Filmmakers'

Lounge - Industry Conference Room, Press & Industry, Industry Programming; ***World of Goopi and Bagha, The***, Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah Atkinson Family Cinema, Public 1, TIFF Kids

**4:15 PM *Enough Said***, Scotiabank 3, Press & Industry 1, Special Presentation; ***Heart of a Lion***, Scotiabank 10, Public 2, Contemporary World Cinema; ***To the Wolf***, Scotiabank 5, Press & Industry 1, City to City

**4:30 PM *Cannibal***, Scotiabank 2, Public 2, Special Presentation; ***Fake, The***, Scotiabank 8, Press & Industry 1, Vanguard; ***Hi-Ho Mistahey!***, Cinema 1, Public 1, TIFF Docs; ***Like Father, Like Son***, Winter Garden Theatre, Public 1, Special Presentation; ***People in Places***, Scotiabank 9, Public 2, Vanguard; ***Rags and Tatters***, Scotiabank 6, Press & Industry 1, Contemporary World Cinema

**4:45 PM *Love is the Perfect Crime***, Scotiabank 14, Public 2, Special Presentation

**5:00 PM *Industry Happy Hour***, Glenn Gould Lobby, Press & Industry, Industry Programming; ***Sea***,



Dome Karukoski's  
*Heart of a Lion*

**The**, Cinema 2, Public 1,  
Contemporary World Cinema

**5:30 PM indieWIRE @  
Filmmakers' Lounge 2013** -  
Session 1, Filmmakers' Lounge  
- Industry Conference Room,  
Press & Industry, Industry  
Programming; **The Square**,  
Scotiabank 13, Public 2, TIFF  
Docs

**5:45 PM Concrete Night**,  
Cinema 3, Public 1, Masters

**6:00 PM Une Jeune Fille  
(A Journey)**, Jackman Hall,  
Public 1, Contemporary World  
Cinema; **Labor Day**, Ryerson  
Theatre, Public 1, Special  
Presentation; **Mandela:  
Long Walk to Freedom**,  
Roy Thomson Hall, Public 1,  
Gala Presentation; **Young  
& Beautiful**, Visa Screening  
Room (Elgin), Public 1, Special  
Presentation

**6:15 PM Canopy**, Scotiabank 5,  
Press & Industry 1, Discovery;  
**Celestial Wives of the  
Meadow Mari**, Scotiabank 7,  
Press & Industry 1, Vanguard;  
**Metalhead**, Scotiabank 4,  
Public 1, Contemporary World  
Cinema

**6:30 PM Bad Hair**, Isabel  
Bader Theatre, Public 1,  
Contemporary World Cinema;

**Can a Song Save Your Life?**,  
Princess of Wales, Public 1,  
Special Presentation; **Dog,  
The**, Scotiabank 3, Public 1,  
TIFF Docs; **J.A.C.E. - Just  
Another Confused Elephant**,  
Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah  
Atkinson Family Cinema,  
Public 1, City to City

**6:45 PM The Immoral**,  
Scotiabank 6, Press & Industry  
1, Contemporary World  
Cinema; **My Love Awaits Me  
by the Sea**, Scotiabank 11,  
Public 1, Discovery; **Those  
Happy Years**, Scotiabank 1,  
Public 1, Special Presentation;  
**We Gotta Get Out of This  
Place**, The Bloor Hot Docs  
Cinema, Public 1, Vanguard

**7:00 PM, Blind Dates**,  
Scotiabank 8, Public 2,  
Contemporary World Cinema;  
**Of Good Report**, Scotiabank  
10, Public 2, Discovery

**7:15 PM Little Feet** preceded  
by Old Moon, Scotiabank 9,  
Public 1, Contemporary World  
Cinema; **Mystery Road**,  
Cinema 1, Public 1, Special  
Presentation

**7:30 PM Abuse of Weakness**,  
Scotiabank 14, Public 2,  
Masters; **For Those Who Can  
Tell No Tales**, Scotiabank 2,  
Public 1, Special Presentation;  
**Ida**, Cinema 2, Public 1, Special  
Presentation

**8:00 PM The Double**, Winter  
Garden Theatre, Public 1,  
Special Presentation

**8:30 PM The Mayor**,  
Scotiabank 5, Press & Industry  
1, TIFF Docs; **Southcliffe**,  
Scotiabank 13, Public 2, Special  
Presentation; **Wavelengths 2:  
Now & Then**, Jackman Hall,  
Public 1, Wavelengths

**8:45 PM The Strange Colour  
of Your Body's Tears**,  
Scotiabank 7, Press & Industry  
1, Vanguard; **'TIL MADNESS  
DO US PART**, Cinema 3, Public  
1, Wavelengths

**9:00 PM All Is By My Side**,  
Visa Screening Room (Elgin),  
Public 1, Special Presentation;

**The F Word**, Ryerson Theatre,  
Public 1, Special Presentation;  
**The Fake**, Scotiabank 4, Public  
1, Vanguard

**9:15 PM Cinemanovels**,  
Scotiabank 11, Public 2,  
Contemporary World  
Cinema; **Ningen**, Cinema 5 -  
NBCUniversal Cinema, Press  
& Industry 1, Contemporary  
World Cinema; **The Station**,  
Scotiabank 6, Press & Industry  
1, Midnight Madness

**9:30 PM Club Sandwich**,  
Scotiabank 3, Public 1,  
Contemporary World Cinema;  
**Mission Congo**, Scotiabank  
8, Public 2, TIFF Docs; **Sex,  
Drugs & Taxation**, The Bloor  
Hot Docs Cinema, Public  
1, Vanguard; **Words and  
Pictures**, Roy Thomson Hall,  
Public 1, Gala Presentation

**9:45 PM Break Loose**,  
Scotiabank 1, Public 1,  
Contemporary World Cinema;  
**Fading Gigolo**, Isabel Bader  
Theatre, Public 1, Special  
Presentation; **Sapi**, Scotiabank  
10, Public 2, Vanguard; **Short  
Cuts Canada Programme 1**,  
Cinema 2, Public 1, Short Cuts  
Canada

**10:00 PM Dallas Buyers  
Club, Princess of Wales**,  
Public 1, Special Presentation;  
**Fat**, Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah  
Atkinson Family Cinema,  
Public 1, Discovery; **Intruders**,  
Scotiabank 9, Public 2,  
Contemporary World Cinema;  
**Unbeatable**, Scotiabank 2,  
Public 2, Contemporary World  
Cinema

**10:15 PM Made in America**,  
Cinema 1, Public 1, Mavericks;  
**Pioneer**, Scotiabank 14, Public  
2, Special Presentation

**10:30 PM A Spell to Ward Off  
the Darkness**, Jackman Hall,  
Public 1, Wavelengths

**11:59 PM The Green Inferno**,  
Ryerson Theatre, Public 1,  
Midnight Madness

## TOMORROW

**8:30 AM Therese**, Scotiabank  
4, Press & Industry 1, Special

Presentation; **We Gotta Get  
Out of This Place**, Scotiabank  
6, Press & Industry 1,  
Vanguard; **You Are Here**, The  
Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, Public  
2, Special Presentation

**8:45 AM, The F Word**,  
Scotiabank 2, Press & Industry 1,  
Special Presentation; **Le Grand  
Cahier**, Scotiabank 8, Press  
& Industry 1, Contemporary  
World Cinema; **Supermensch  
The Legend of Shep Gordon**,  
Scotiabank 10, Press & Industry  
1, Gala Presentation

**9:00 AM Labor Day**, Cinema 1,  
Public 2, Special Presentation;  
**Manakamana**, Jackman Hall,  
Public 2, Wavelengths; **Short  
Cuts Canada Programme**  
1, Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah  
Atkinson Family Cinema,  
Press & Industry 1, Short  
Cuts Canada, **Watermark**,  
Scotiabank 13, Public 2,  
Special Presentation;  
**When Evening Falls on  
Bucharest or Metabolism**,  
Scotiabank 7, Press & Industry  
1, Contemporary World  
Cinema; **Words and Pictures**,  
Scotiabank 1, Press & Industry  
1, Gala Presentation

**9:15 AM Dog, The**, Scotiabank  
3, Press & Industry 1, TIFF Docs;  
**Empire of Dirt**, Scotiabank  
14, Public 2, Contemporary  
World Cinema; **Last of Robin  
Hood, The**, Scotiabank 11,  
Press & Industry 1, Special  
Presentation

**9:30 AM The Dark Matter of  
Love**, Scotiabank 9, Press &  
Industry 1, TIFF Docs; **I'm the  
Same I'm an Other**, Cinema 5  
- NBCUniversal Cinema, Press  
& Industry 1, Wavelengths

**9:45 AM Hiroshima Mon  
Amour**, Cinema 3, Public 1,  
TIFF Cinematheque; **The Kids  
From the Port**, Scotiabank  
5, Press & Industry 1,  
Contemporary World Cinema

**10:00 AM Enough Said**,  
Isabel Bader Theatre, Public  
2, Special Presentation; **Like  
Father, Like Son**, Cinema 2,  
Public 2, Special Presentation;  
**Meet the EU Film Funders**,

Filmmakers' Lounge -  
Industry Conference Room,  
Press & Industry, Industry  
Programming

**10:45 AM For No Good  
Reason**, Scotiabank 6, Press  
& Industry 1, Mavericks; **Short  
Cuts Canada Programme**  
1, Cinema 4 - Paul & Leah  
Atkinson Family Cinema,  
Public 2, Short Cuts Canada;  
**Those Happy Years**,  
Scotiabank 4, Press & Industry  
1, Special Presentation

**11:00 AM Break Loose**,  
Scotiabank 10, Press & Industry  
1, Contemporary World  
Cinema; **Dallas Buyers Club**,  
Visa Screening Room (Elgin),  
Public 2, Special Presentation;  
**You Are Here**, Scotiabank  
2, Press & Industry 1, Special  
Presentation

**11:15 AM Midway**, Scotiabank  
8, Press & Industry 1, TIFF  
Docs; **Walesa. Man of Hope.**,  
Scotiabank 7, Press & Industry  
1, Special Presentation

**11:30 AM The Dinner**,  
Scotiabank 11, Press &  
Industry 1, Contemporary  
World Cinema; **The Double**,  
Scotiabank 3, Press & Industry  
1, Special Presentation; **The  
F Word**, The Bloor Hot Docs  
Cinema, Public 2, Special  
Presentation; **Khumba**,  
Scotiabank 13, Public 1, TIFF  
Kids; **Spotlight: Nigeria  
beyond Nollywood**,  
Filmmakers' Lounge -  
Industry Conference Room,  
Press & Industry, Industry  
Programming

**11:45 AM All Is By My Side**,  
Scotiabank 1, Press & Industry  
1, Special Presentation; **Fat**,  
Scotiabank 9, Press & Industry  
1, Discovery; **For Those Who  
Can Tell No Tales**, Scotiabank  
5, Press & Industry 1, Special  
Presentation

**12:00 PM Can a Song Save  
Your Life?**, Ryerson Theatre,  
Public 2, Special Presentation;  
**Ida**, Scotiabank 14, Public 2,  
Special Presentation; **The Last  
of the Unjust**, Jackman Hall,  
Public 1, TIFF Docs **THR**

# 8 Decades of *The Hollywood Reporter*

The most glamorous and memorable moments from a storied history



McConaughey, pictured at the 2001 festival party for *Thirteen Conversations About One Thing*, is back this year with the drama *Dallas Buyers Club*, which has its world premiere here Sept. 7.

Matthew McConaughey became a real-life fest hero in 2001

**F**OLLOWING THE 2001 Toronto International Film Festival premiere of *Thirteen Conversations About One Thing*, an ensemble drama in which he played a New York City district attorney, Matthew McConaughey made headlines. But not for his onscreen performance. McConaughey, then 31, became the night's hero when he aided an audience member experiencing a sudden epileptic seizure during the screening's final minutes. "All of a sudden, somebody screams, 'Get a doctor!'" recalls *Thirteen Conversations* producer Beni Atoori. The emergency halted the screening, and the actor gave the woman, unconscious and foaming at the lips, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Following an ambulance transfer and a standing ovation for the actor's efforts, the screening resumed and the incident became the next day's "talk of Toronto," says Atoori. The producer says during the incident the audience of several hundred looked on in confusion and McConaughey was the first and only person to offer assistance. "Matt just jumped out of his seat and did what he thought was right," says Atoori. "He saved the woman, but what she was really excited about was she got to kiss McConaughey."

— MEENA JANG

**McConaughey premieres as a hero**  
Matthew McConaughey emerged a hero at the Toronto International Film Festival on Friday night at the world premiere of his "*13 Conversations About One Thing*." Some 10 minutes before the end of the screening, a woman in the audience suffered an epileptic seizure and McConaughey rushed to her aid. As for the film itself, sources confirmed that 24 hours later four offers for domestic distribution were on the table for WMA Independent's Cassian Elwes and Rena Ronson to field. (Zorianna Kit in Toronto)

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As a young woman prepares a memorial film retrospective for her late estranged father, his work begins to influence her life in strange and significant ways.

## TIFF SCREENINGS

(P&I) Thursday	Sept 5 @ 21:00h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>7</b>
Friday	Sept 6 @ 18:15h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>4</b>
Saturday	Sept 7 @ 21:15h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>11</b>
(P&I) Thursday	Sept 12 @ 10:30h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>14</b>
Sunday	Sept 15 @ 12:00h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>11</b>

CARA GEE JENNIFER PODEMSKI SHAY EYRE LUKE KIRBY

# EMPIRE OF DIRT



A FILM BY PETER STEBBINGS



Three generations of First Nations women struggle to deal with the demons of their past, in this powerful and affecting drama from actor-turned-director Peter Stebbings (Defendor).

## TIFF SCREENINGS

(P&I) Friday	Sept 6 @ 09:15h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>14</b>
Friday	Sept 6 @ 21:45h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>2</b>
Sunday	Sept 8 @ 09:15h	<b>Scotiabank</b>	<b>14</b>